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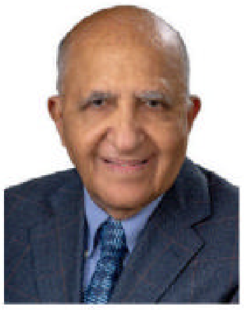
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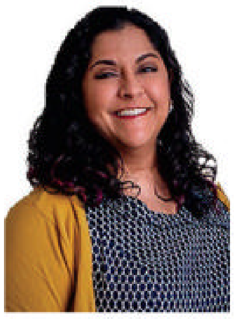
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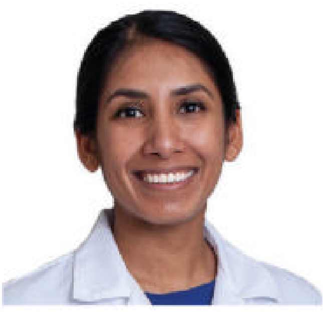
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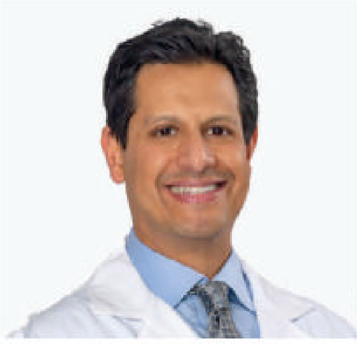
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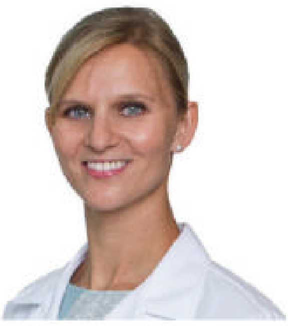
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Volume 72 ■ Number 1

FEATURES

CHIJAN

LAND OF LINCOLN
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19 ILLINOIS 64

King caught this 1964 scene in Uptown.

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The Lost Photos of Jay King

The noted street photographer spent years capturing everyday life in the city. Decades later, *Chicago* is publishing some of his images for the first time.
By Richard Cahan and Michael Williams

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OUR 30 FAVORITE THINGS TO EAT RIGHT NOW

From over-the-top banana bread to spiced Cambodian beef skewers, these are the dishes we can't get enough of.

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He's trusted by virtuosos and collectors to repair some of the world's most fabled instruments. How does John Becker manage to unlock the sound of a Stradivarius?
By Elly Fishman

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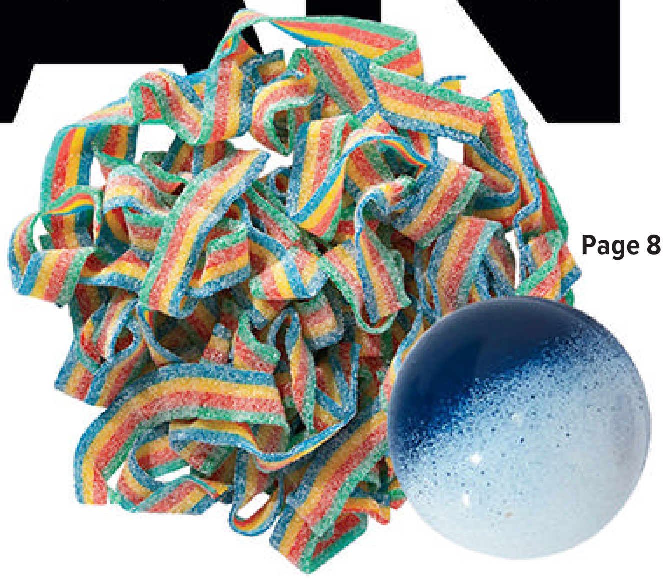
TOP PRIMARY CARE DOCTORS

They serve as your first stop for medical needs. And these 262, nominated by their peers, are the best in the six-county area. **Plus:** What's in their medicine cabinets?

Photograph by JAY KING

DEPARTMENTS

CHIJAN



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ON THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY POWELL JORDANO

PHOTOGRAPHY: (COVER) FOOD STYLING BY MOLLIE HAYWARD; (NUSSBAUM) KRISTIE KAHNS; (CANDY) LISA PREDKO; (WINE) LUCY HEWETT

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FROM THE EDITOR

Music to Her Ears

↑ **Top (from left): James Ehnes, John Becker, and Joshua Bell Below: Elly Fishman**

ELLY FISHMAN HAS A MESSAGE FOR young journalists: You never know where you'll find a story idea. The former *Chicago* senior editor, who is now a freelance writer, was at her book club when a woman mentioned that her father-in-law was an expert in repairing Stradivarius violins. "I was like, 'What did you just say?' " recalls Fishman.

Fishman had a particular interest in the story of John Becker ("The Violin Doctor," page 58). "Growing up, I played viola in the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra," she says. "I spent years coming in and out of the Fine Arts Building and had no idea that John was on the 10th floor doing this work, with some of the world's finest violinists visiting his shop. It was right under my nose."

The highlight of her reporting came when she had the chance to meet two such violinists. "The first day I interviewed John, he said, 'Oh, do you want to come back next week? Joshua Bell and James Ehnes will be here.' " That's when it sank in for Fishman just how rarefied a realm Becker inhabits. She took him up on his offer, of course, and enjoyed what was essentially a private concert as the virtuosos tried out instruments. "I was literally 10 feet from James Ehnes as he played. It was amazing. Who gets to do that?"

Terrance Noland
Editor in Chief

INSIDE PEEK

Michael Williams and Richard Cahan

Lost and Found

FORMER *SUN-TIMES* PICTURE EDITOR Richard Cahan and his collaborator, Michael Williams, have long admired street photographer Jay King. The duo even published some of his shots in their 2017 book *Chicago: Classic Photographs*. So they were thrilled when King reached out to say he'd returned to the darkroom to print never-before-seen images that dated back more than half a century. Meeting with him at the Evanston Public Library, they were awed by not only the pictures ("The Lost Photos of Jay King," page 68) but also his memory. "I was surprised how much Jay remembered of every shot that he took," Cahan says. "This is his diary, in some ways."

–JACK McGANN

Jeff Marini

PRETTY PLATES

There's a lot more to food photography than, well, the food. Jeff Marini, who shot "Our 30 Favorite Things to Eat Right Now" (page 48), takes a holistic approach, "bringing in elements of the restaurant or different surfaces or having fun with the light," he says. "When I walk into a restaurant, the first thing I'm doing is looking at the windows and all the different textures I have access to, because you only have a few minutes before your food starts to die." –J.M.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (NOLAND) MICHAEL ZAJAKOWSKI; (BECKER) JOHN J. BECKER; (FISHMAN) ALYSSA SCHUKAR; (WILLIAMS, CAHAN) JOEL LERNER; (MARINI) JEFF MARINI

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"I'LL BE TELLING A GIRL, 'YOU NEED TO GO TO THE DOCTOR AND KEEP UP WITH YOUR APPOINTMENTS,' AND SHE'LL BE LIKE, 'LADY, I SLEPT IN THE PARK LAST NIGHT.'"

Go Chez [Smith] and Gyrls in the HOOD! You made a perfect choice, *Chicago* mag.

@msmareneb *via Instagram*

Local Trailblazers

My first encounter with Nick Cave [“Chicagoans of the Year,” December] was when he led a troop of costumed art students through the streets of downtown under the L. He’s never stopped being memorable!

Gwenda Joyce *via Facebook*

Thank you for shining a light on these change makers. Our city is lucky to have them all.
@hollytothedangerzone *via Instagram*

KUDOS TO A RAPPER FOR GETTING CLEAN

Saying he had the opportunity to learn from his mistakes shows that [Vic Mensa] takes his sobriety and mental health in a more serious manner [“ ‘I Didn’t Care About My Life,’ ” November]. He’s a survivor, and I look forward to hearing his next project.
@citizen_sim *via Twitter*

BEARS ON THE MOVE

Wishing no ill will to the Arlington Heights taxpayers, I am happy that the Bears have targeted a government other than the City of Chicago to hold hostage [“Too Much to Bear?,” December]. Sports organizations trade in fan “loyalty” and then show none themselves when it is time to support their home city.
@j_chytown *via Twitter*

They blackmailed and forced Chicago into a knowingly bad project and now are running from it, leaving the city on dust and claiming “not good enough.” They will abuse Arlington Heights the same way if allowed.
@gustavodemello *via Twitter*

FANS OF ALPANA

One of the best interviews I’ve read in a while [“Backroom: Alpana Singh,” November].
@carlyafisher *via Twitter*

Arrogance? I consider her totally charming (at least on *Check, Please!*).
Eric Forte *via Facebook*

Alpana Singh, you are a groundbreaker — a badass. Never apologize.
@minalgiri *via Twitter*

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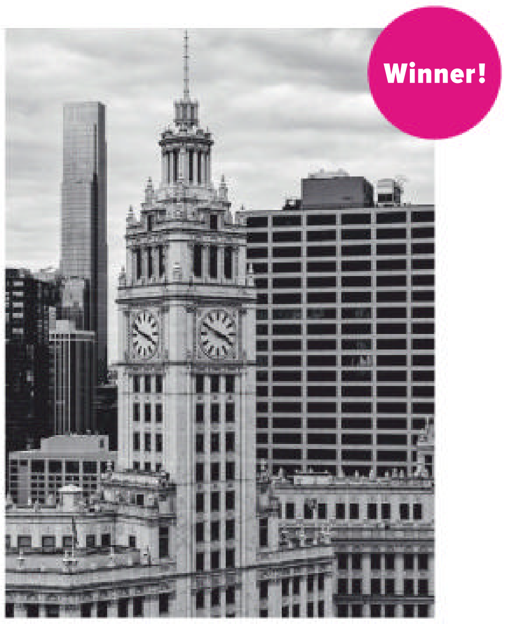

@andrewofchi

In October, during Open House Chicago, Andrew Ing, an HR recruiter and a lifelong Chinatown resident, visited 333 N. Michigan Ave. with his Fujifilm X100V camera. "I was able to go to the 26th floor and get that beautiful view [of the Wrigley Building]," says Ing, who made the image black and white to "focus on the details and clock tower." Ing, who has dabbled in architectural photography for six years, gravitates toward shooting Gothic and art deco designs: "The Wrigley Building and Tribune Tower stand out in the city and country." –JACK MCGANN

WE ALSO LOVED …

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NEXT CONTEST

Post your best high-resolution shot of **tacos** on Instagram by January 15. Follow and tag @chicagomag and include #chimagcontest on your story or post to be considered. The winner will be featured in the March issue and will receive a one-year subscription to *Chicago* magazine.

PHOTOGRAPH: (TOP) ANDREW ING; (LEFT) MATT LOHMUS; (RIGHT) PIOTR SENKOW

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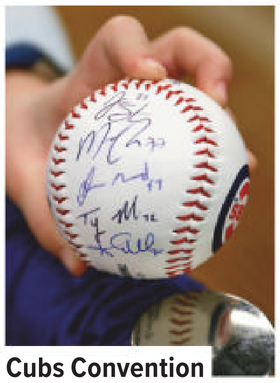


Cubs Convention

Talking Points

This month's conversation starters

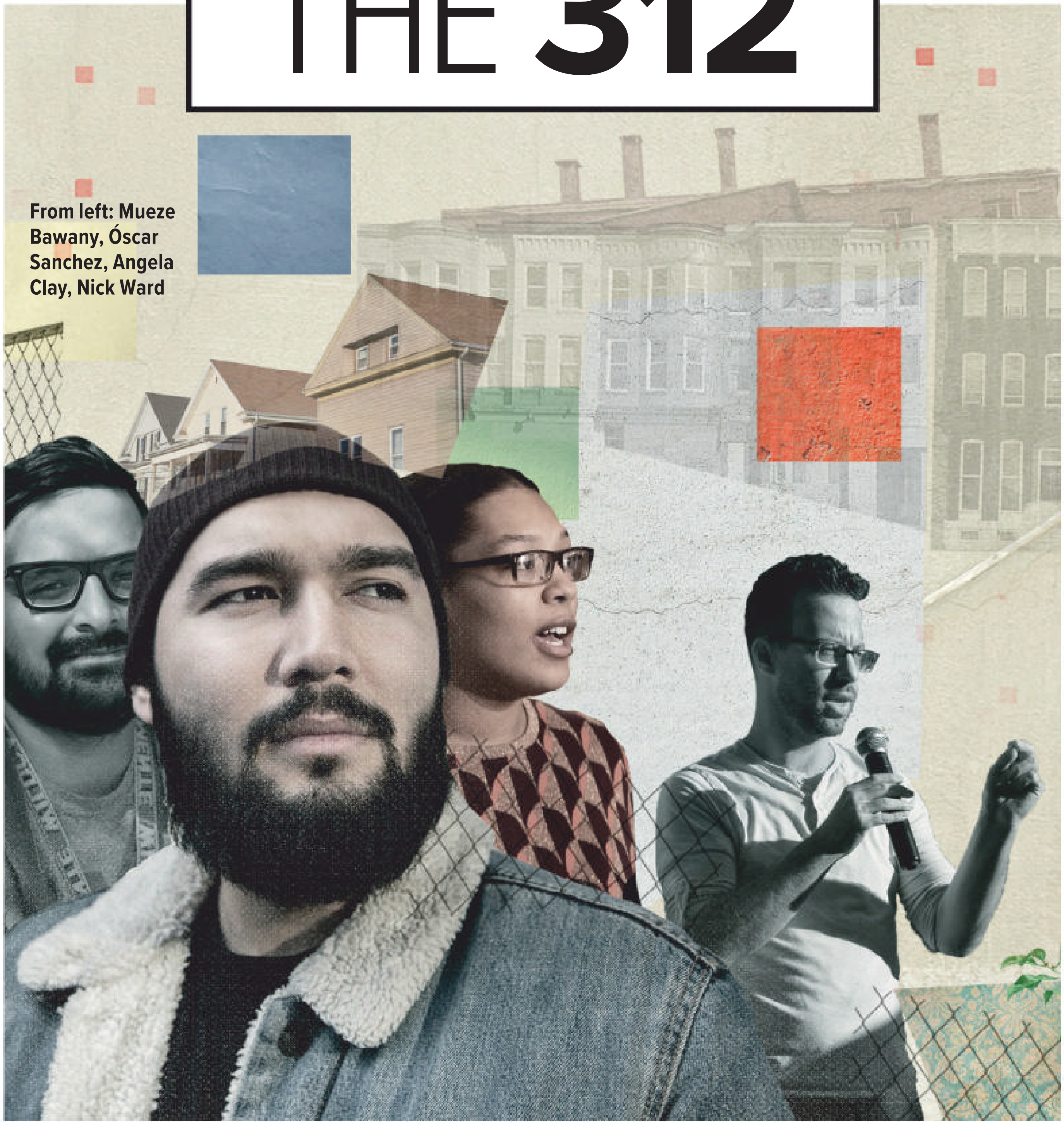
1 The **SAFE-T Act**, which Darren Bailey made an issue in the governor's race, goes into effect Jan. 1. It ends cash bail and bans police from using chokeholds and military weaponry.

2 When state reps are sworn in Jan. 11, Democrats will have a **superdupermajority** in the House: 78 of 118 seats—more than they ever held under former speaker Michael Madigan, and more evidence Illinois has become a one-party state.

3 **Cubs Convention** is back, coming to the Sheraton Grand Chicago Jan. 13–15, after two years of COVID cancellations. South Siders will have to wait till next year, though: SoxFest has been called off for the third straight winter.

4 Politics never ends in Chicago. **Early voting** for the Feb. 28 municipal elections starts in late January—two and a half months after the midterms. Polls show three out of four Chicagoans want a mayor other than Lori Lightfoot.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BASEBALL) ABEL URIBE/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (BAWANY, SANCHEZ, CLAY) *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (WARD) NEIGHBORS FOR NICK WARD



From left: Mueze Bawany, Óscar Sanchez, Angela Clay, Nick Ward

Red Wave

Democratic socialists see next month's City Council elections as a chance to build an influential bloc. By EDWARD ROBERT McCLELLAND

MUEZE BAWANY, WHO IS RUNNING FOR ALDERMAN OF THE 50TH WARD, IS A HIGH school teacher, a son of Pakistani immigrants, and a Muslim who keeps a prayer rug in his campaign office, a converted used-car showroom on Western Avenue. If he succeeds in his campaign to unseat Alderman Debra Silverstein, though, it may not be because of any of those qualities, but because he has the support of the Chicago chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. Every Sunday, in a tactic borrowed from the machine, a dozen socialists from around the city knock on doors in West Ridge for Bawany.

In 2019, six democratic socialists were elected to the City Council, tying Chicago with New York City for the largest such municipal caucus in the nation. This year, in the February 28 aldermanic elections, the DSA is running four more candidates, trying to take advantage of a record number of aldermanic retirements and an electorate that has been radicalized by Donald Trump's

Illustration by DANA SMITH

presidency, the pandemic, and protests over social injustice. Besides Bawany, the DSA has endorsed Óscar Sanchez in the 10th Ward, Angela Clay in the 46th, and Nick Ward in the 48th – all open seats.

"I think they have a good chance," says former alderman Joe Moore, now a City Hall lobbyist. "They're running candidates all over the place, not just simply the far north lakefront and Wicker Park–Bucktown, traditional bastions of far-left liberalism. They clearly have the energy right now. It's a continuation of the reaction to the politics of Trump and the right-wing Republicans." (In a sign of that momentum, two democratic socialists won offices in November: Rachel Ventura for the Illinois Senate and Anthony Quezada for the Cook County Board.)

Bawany and his fellow socialists want to shift funds from policing to mental health services, build more affordable housing, and impose taxes on real estate and financial transactions. Will such a platform appeal to the 50th Ward, which has some of the most conservative voters in the city, including a precinct Trump won by 44 points?

Bawany believes it will. The 35-year-old sees his heavily immigrant ward as "the essence of the working class – a home for gig workers, home health care workers, nurses, social workers." Half of the ward's South Asian community lives at the poverty level, he says – an experience he went through as a child, when his father struggled to support the family by driving a taxi. "We have no affordable housing here," Bawany says. "Me and my brothers, together with our parents, we lived in a studio for six years. We used curtains to separate five people." Bawany wants to bring in a development of 100 percent affordable housing, similar to the Lucy Gonzalez Parsons Apartments built in the 35th Ward under democratic socialist alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.

That's a success at the ward level, where socialist aldermen have been able to wield some power. But they haven't passed their citywide priorities, because their numbers are too small and their goals too "pie in the sky," as one committee chairman termed their proposal for canceling ComEd's franchise agreement and placing the city's utilities under public ownership. However, if they add a few aldermen and the city elects a progressive mayor (Brandon Johnson is their candidate of choice), their so-called La Salle Street tax, a levy of $1 or $2 on transactions at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and the Chicago Board Options Exchange, would be "a done deal," says Moore. "If there's a dozen of them, they could have real influence." Then he adds a dig: "They might not get everything they want, because they don't have a foot in reality."

> **"They clearly have the energy right now. It's a continuation of the reaction to the politics of Trump."**
>
> *—City Hall lobbyist Joe Moore*

The socialists may also be held back by two issues that have always hampered left-wing movements. One is a doctrinaire insistence on the party line. Last year, the DSA censured Alderman Andre Vasquez after he voted for Mayor Lori Lightfoot's budget, which socialists condemned for its "austerity." Vasquez still calls himself a democratic socialist, but he did not seek the group's endorsement for his reelection. The other is money. The Chicago DSA claims 3,000 members but had only $10,806 in its campaign coffers as of September. (As the saying goes, a socialist is someone who has nothing and wants to share it with everyone.) The group plans to distribute 60 percent of that among its nine endorsed candidates, says cochair Steve Weishampel. That's an average of $720. Four years ago, the typical aldermanic campaign cost about $177,000.

Nick Ward, one of ten candidates running for the seat being vacated by Harry Osterman, became politically active during the pandemic. Working with the Uptown & Buena Park Solidarity Network, he delivered groceries to elderly shut-ins and propane tanks to homeless people under the DuSable Lake Shore Drive viaducts. "I think the pandemic and the social unrest in 2020 really brought into sharp focus the ways in which we just don't have enough resources for people in our communities," Ward says. "That there were neighbors coming together to make sure that people were stabilized and alive was incredibly moving. The fact that our local leaders weren't doing that was very frustrating."

Ward, 41, a waiter and a member of the storytelling troupe 2nd Story, declared his candidacy in February, before Osterman announced he was retiring, and sought the DSA endorsement because "they're really activated around the issues that help support working families in the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods." (He cites Alderman Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez's "mutual aid work" in the 33rd Ward, where she used her office to collect and distribute resources to the needy.) Ward is seeking to represent an Edgewater-based ward where a one-bedroom apartment rents for an average of $1,447, up 12 percent from a year ago. For that reason, he supports the Bring Chicago Home ordinance, which would increase the real estate transfer tax by 1.9 percentage points on home sales of more than $1 million, generating $163 million a year toward housing for the homeless. And he favors increasing the requirement for affordable housing from 20 to 30 percent whenever a development goes through a zoning change.

Alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez, a democratic socialist elected in the 25th Ward in 2019, believes the time could be right to get such proposals passed: "Maybe we can double the size of the caucus. Ultimately, with a greater majority of socialists and progressives, we can push forward the vision we have and the platforms we've seen [that] have popular support but have so far failed to gain political support."

Leftists always claims to speak for the people, but the people don't always vote the left into power. Perhaps this year, the people united will not be defeated. C

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VOX

Bless the Beasts

Martha Nussbaum argues that making life better for animals makes life better for us, too.

Interview by KERRY REID

PHILOSOPHER MARTHA Nussbaum has been developing the capabilities approach to human well-being and rights for decades. The theory, which builds on the framework of Indian economist Amartya Sen, argues that it's society's duty to nourish our ability to lead fulfilling, healthy lives.

In her new book, *Justice for Animals: Our Collective Responsibility* (out January 3), the University of Chicago law and ethics professor expands that realm to animals. As Nussbaum writes: "Each sentient creature (capable of having a subjective point of view on the world and feeling pain and pleasure) should have the opportunity to flourish in the form of life characteristic for that creature." Factory farms, zoos, pet breeders – as well as what humans can do to advocate for and protect animals – all fall under Nussbaum's discerning lens.

Q: In your book, you identify the qualities of wonder, compassion, and outrage as resources for helping people understand the ethical framework of animal rights. Do you see those as a trajectory?

A: I imagine a typical trajectory that starts with wonder: We get curious about animals and think how amazing they are, then look more closely. We see they're not doing well in many cases. And in many of those cases, the bad situation is caused by human injustice. So then comes compassion. We feel they're suffering, and it's not their fault. And that leads into outrage. How outrageous it is that these pigs live in these horrible gestation crates where they can't move.

Q: Yet there's been slowness to incorporate this outrage into laws that protect animals. How do you think the capabilities approach might bridge the gap?

A: The capabilities approach is meant to be very close to people's own perceptions. If you live with a dog, you understand

Photograph by KRISTIE KAHNS

that the dog needs movement, company, attention, all these different things, all these different abilities. To turn that into law is the tricky thing. Now, we do have some laws that are good but underenforced. Let me start with dogs. We have these puppy mills that breed dogs in terribly substandard conditions, and they're selling them at pet shops all over the place. The puppy mills themselves are pretty localized. Most are in Missouri, some in Iowa, but they sell all over the country. It's a terrible torture for these dogs. But then they still look cute, and people don't realize where they're coming from. The problem is that the states in which these mills are making big profit have been unable to pass laws regulating these breeders. Then the states in which the puppies are sold have to take up the slack. Chicago has really been very proactive. The City Council passed a law [in 2014] making it illegal to buy a dog through a pet store unless you have evidence that it comes from a recognized shelter. Now, at first, that wasn't enough because there were these bogus organizations that the puppy mill people set up. They were just fronts. So then Alderman Brian Hopkins got after that and he proposed an amendment, which passed [in 2021], saying that it would have to be regulated in very specific ways. So right now, Chicago has pretty good laws. But the problem is, people go to the suburbs if they think, Oh, I don't want a mature dog, I want a cute little puppy. Now, some suburbs have good laws too, but it's so piecemeal, right? What we really need is a statewide law about this.

Q: You point out that it's even harder to legislate for animals across national borders, since many animals migrate.

A: The really sclerotic situation here is to coordinate different nations that have different ideas of animal rights, different incentives in terms of industry and their greed for products. Whaling is my example. We do have an International Whaling Commission, but that was set up really by people who love the killing of whales but just thought we have to rein it in so the whales don't all go extinct. The trouble is that practices are very well entrenched. And there are some nations, particularly Japan, where they use all kinds of bogus arguments to defend what's going on. And then when they lose in court – and they have – they just withdrew from the International Whaling Commission. Whales are still being harpooned, not just by Japan but also by Norway and many other nations.

Q: What about the idea of individual animals receiving standing in judicial systems?

A: Everyone says, "Of course animals can't go to court, blah, blah, blah." But the fact is, none of us go to court on our own unless we're very foolish. We retain a lawyer. Then there are people who couldn't even actively solicit legal representation, like those with severe cognitive disabilities, who still have standing to sue in court. Just because they're human, they can be the plaintiffs in an action if they're being abused. And so why shouldn't this be the case for animals? There have been four countries that have given some legal standing to animals. The most fun one is Colombia, where Pablo Escobar brought a whole bunch of hippos. He just liked exotic animals, but he let them run wild. These hippos were running around and breeding quite prolifically, and people felt this was a nuisance at a certain point. Hippos are, in fact, very aggressive. [Colombia] decided to just go and shoot them all. And so a humane organization brought an action in the name of the hippos. So it says, you know, "Hippos of Such-and-Such against Colombia." The U.S. did allow some expert witnesses to go testify in the Colombia case, and the court said, "We will recognize the role of these experts." So that was a sort of end of the wedge, maybe, toward getting standing in U.S. courts. Someday this has got to happen. [Rather than killing the hippos, Colombia is now castrating the males to prevent breeding.]

"The whole natural world is really part of our human apparatus of concern. We're living more narrowly as human beings if we don't awaken ourselves to the world around us."

Q: In the field of philosophers and scholars working in the capabilities approach, do you see a growing consensus that animal rights is the next frontier?

A: It's actually pretty controversial. There are people who think that human suffering takes priority, takes absolute priority. So unless we eradicate hunger, child poverty, and so on, we shouldn't even think about the situation of animals. One time when I gave a plenary address on the sufferings of animals and what we should do about it, I heard later that people were saying, "Oh, has Nussbaum given up on human suffering?" I actually think, first of all, the whole natural world is really part of our human apparatus of concern. We're living more narrowly as human beings if we don't awaken ourselves to the world around us. So that's part of my answer. But the other part is, it isn't an either-or. Reducing human suffering and reducing animal suffering involve many of the same issues. That is, preserving natural habitats, trying to deal more responsively with issues of the corporate attempt to manufacture food that isn't really healthy. The food that's produced in the factory farm industry is actually not very good for human beings. So we would all be better off if some of these reforms were enacted. I see no reason that they're in competition with trying to end human poverty.

FIVE THINGS

Seeking Justice for Emmett Till

The new book *A Few Days Full of Trouble* details the long struggle of the Chicago teenager's family to get legal accountability for his brutal murder. Here's what we learned. By LOLLY BOWEAN

A Few Days Full of Trouble
Revelations on the Journey to Justice for My Cousin and Best Friend, Emmett Till
Reverend Wheeler Parker Jr. and Christopher Benson

Till with his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley

1 Emmett Till's mother was still fighting for justice when she died. If you've seen the movie *Till*, you know that Mamie Till-Mobley kept her son's story alive with speeches and interviews about his 1955 murder in Mississippi, for which no one was convicted. But the authors, the Reverend Wheeler Parker Jr., a cousin of Till's, and Northwestern University journalism professor and attorney Christopher Benson, write that Till-Mobley also worked with investigators and attorneys. On the day she died—January 6, 2003—she was preparing to meet activist Alvin Sykes and filmmaker Keith Beauchamp about building a case for criminal charges against accomplices in the murder.

2 John McCain had a connection to the Till family. Parker's wife is a descendent of the "Black McCains," enslaved on a Mississippi plantation owned by the late senator's ancestors.

3 A unique legal provision reopened the case. The statute of limitations blocked Till's family from seeking federal charges. But a law permitting federal officials to look for answers in unsolved cases allowed the FBI to open a new investigation in 2004.

4 The historian who claimed Till's accuser recanted testimony sat on the confession for 10 years. Carolyn Bryant was 21 when she accused 14-year-old Till of whistling at her, leading to his lynching. Her testimony helped exonerate her husband and his half brother. In a 2007 interview, Bryant told historian Timothy Tyson she had lied on the stand. But it wasn't until 2017 that Tyson revealed Bryan's admission in his book *The Blood of Emmett Till*. The FBI investigated but was unable to verify the claim. Tyson said he had it on tape but never produced it.

5 The lack of resolution torments the family. The FBI closed the case in December 2021, saying it had found no new evidence to prove anyone else was involved. "I cry. Every day," Parker writes. "Strange as it might seem, there was a part of me that didn't want it to be over—the investigation. After all, the questions would still linger, and the answers would always taunt us, just beyond reach."

Where It's @

By CORLI JAY

1:42
2,232 Posts
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565 likes
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URL
stylepluscurves.com

- **What it is** A blog advising plus-size women on where to shop and how to put stylish looks together
- **Who is behind it** Amber McCulloch, a Logan Square marketing consultant and model
- **Why she started it** "We have a tiny fraction of the options" other shoppers have, McCulloch says. She began blogging in 2009 after seeing women react to her wardrobe. "I had cars screech to a halt when I walked down the sidewalk: 'Where did you get that skirt?' "
- **Popular post** 2017's "5 Style Rules for Plus Size Wedding Guests"
- **Pro tip** McCulloch finds good options at Eloquii, Target, and Anthropologie.
- **Underlying message** "You're told to wear black, to wear clothes that minimize how you look. It's an attempt to look smaller and not be noticed. I *want* to be noticed."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TILL FAMILY) MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY FAMILY; (INSET) RANDOM HOUSE; (BLOG) AMBER McCULLOCH

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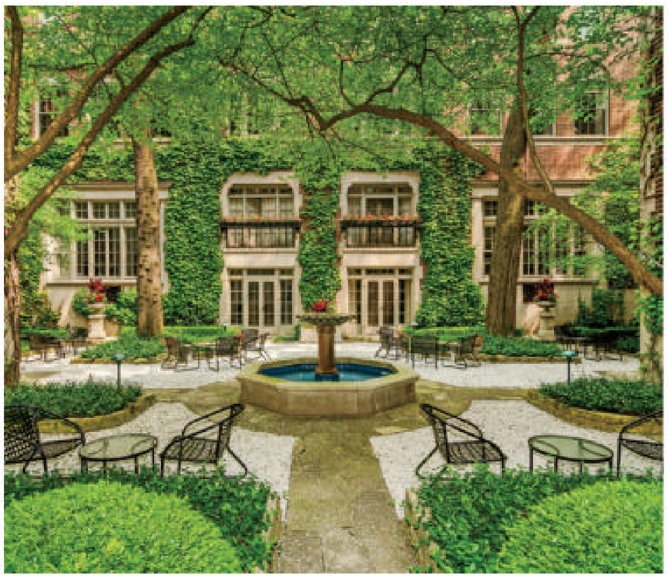
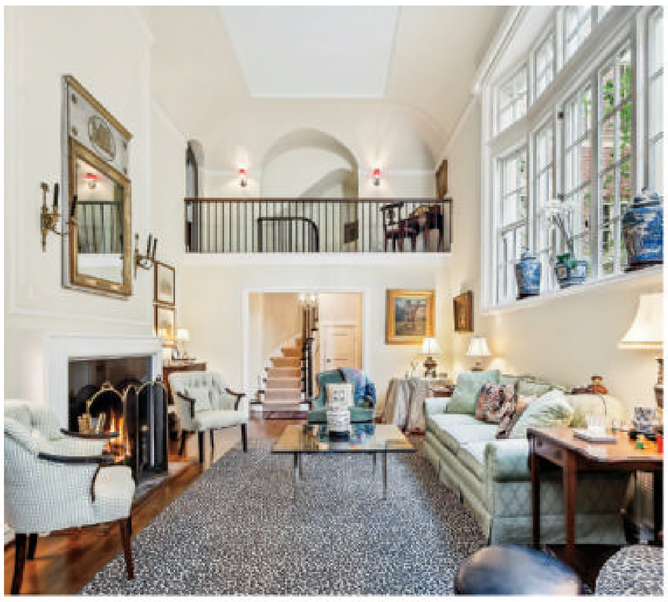
LISTING OF THE MONTH

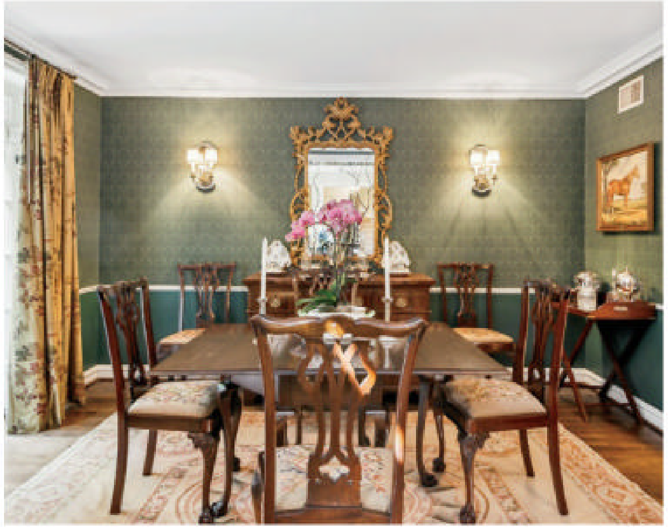
A Sliver of Mansion

A co-op with garden access comes to market in the Gold Coast.

By THOMAS CONNORS



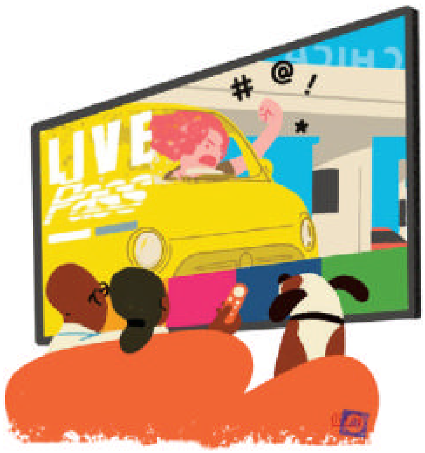




BORN IN NEW YORK CITY and trained at MIT, Chicago architect Andrew Rebori was adept at working on a grand scale. Take his Madonna della Strada Chapel at Loyola University or the classical revival Racquet Club in the Gold Coast. Married to a niece of *Chicago Tribune* publisher Robert McCormick, Rebori was nicely positioned to snag commissions from well-heeled city dwellers. His co-op apartments at 2430 North Lakeview Avenue, completed in 1927, were set up like mansions, with public rooms on one floor, bedrooms above, and impressive staircases in between.

Even when fashioning tighter quarters, he delivered the goods. Built as pieds-à-terre for North Shore millionaires who didn't always want to trek home, the co-op units at 40–50 West Schiller Street are mini versions of his more opulent residences. Featuring fireplaces and formal dining rooms, the apartments share a spacious formal garden centered on a gurgling fountain. A particularly graceful unit, which has not been on the market in 20 years, was recently listed at $925,000.

At three stories and 18 units, the red brick property (built by the Dahl-Stedman Co., the firm that executed Buckingham Fountain) could pass for a pair of substantial single-family homes. Unit 1E measures only 1,700 square feet, but its detailing and layout project a house-like ambience. The double-height living room sports a cove ceiling. Built-in bookcases frame the entry to the adjacent dining room, which opens via French doors to the shared garden. The gently curving staircase to the second floor (where one of three bedrooms was converted to a walk-in closet) is fashioned with wrought-iron balusters. The movers and shakers of the Roaring Twenties used this sweet spot as a crash pad, but in 2023, it looks like a place to plant some roots.



Streaming Chicago

Netflix won't let you use your cousin's login? Here's some alternative local content we'd like to see. –DAVID McMILLIN

ALL-ACCESS ALDERMEN City Council meetings are open to the public, but what are those 50 ward bosses doing when not voting on zoning changes? Go behind the scenes with closed-circuit footage of them approving block parties, smiling at picnics, and shaking down Burger Kings. Subscription includes a monthly waived parking ticket.

LIVEPASS With multiple cameras at each Chicago Skyway tollbooth, viewers can toggle between frustrated drivers calling the I-Pass 800 number and frantically waving their transponders, and those laying on their horns at them. Subscription includes historical footage of vehicles crashing through gates.

CHICAGO+ You've seen the drama of *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, and *Chicago P.D.*, but get ready for a new selection of heart-pounding intensity with *Chicago Department of Water Management* and *Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation*. Subscription includes the thrilling virtual reality experience of piloting a street sweeper around illegally parked cars.

IMPROVCENTRAL Can't make it to your coworker's 10-minute standup set at 1 a.m.? Let her know you'll be watching from your couch with this round-the-clock coverage of up-and-coming comedians who just finished their introduction to improv class. Subscription requires a two-drink minimum.

PHOTOGRAPHY: VHT STUDIOS; ILLUSTRATION: JASON SCHNEIDER

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THE REGIMEN

Denali

Drag diva, skin care devotee, ice queen

By WEB BEHRENS

CORDERO ZUCKERMAN — better known as Denali, the stage name he uses as a drag artist – has a long and varied fitness history. He earned a third-degree black belt in tae kwon do as a kid, then left his home in Fairbanks, Alaska, at 14 to pursue figure-skating dreams in Salt Lake City. There, he learned how to backflip on ice from Jozef “Jumpin’ Joe” Sabovcik, an Olympic medalist who helped him launch a pro career.

Zuckerman began doing drag in his mid-20s (he has been a regular at Berlin since moving to Chicago five years ago), which he saw as a natural progression: “Drag *is* ice skating – so sparkly, dancy, athletic, and over the top.” He even incorporated drag into his figure skating, which led to him being cast in *RuPaul’s Drag Race* in 2021.

Now 30, Zuckerman performs worldwide, including a recent Halloween gig in Australia. The trilingual artist – he speaks English, Spanish, and some Korean – lives in Andersonville with his boyfriend, Alex, and their little dog, Donut.

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HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY START YOUR DAY?
“I have a nice black coffee and go for a run. Most of my creative ideas happen when I’m exercising. My blood is pumping and all of my juices are flowing, and it feels very synesthetic. I’ll see music videos or concepts for photo shoots when I’m running. I grew up doing cross-country, so if you put me on a treadmill, I will go crazy.”

DO YOU STILL SKATE?
“I do, mostly just for fun. I never want to lose my skills completely. I recently did a gig for the Chicago Blackhawks in drag. They had me skate for Pride Night.”

HOW DO YOU UNWIND BEFORE BED?
“I love pampering myself. I’ll have an Epsom salt bath, or do my multistep Korean skin care beauty routine: I cleanse my face with acne wash; go in with multiple serums that contain hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, and retinol; then finish with a light gel moisturizer. I get everything at a Korean-owned shop on Broadway called Choc Choc Cosmetics. They are years ahead with their formulas and serums.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: (DENALI) BAYLY SHELLEY; (COSRX VITAMIN C SERUM) CHOC CHOC COSMETICS ONLINE SHOP

Photograph by LISA PREDKO

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CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

TOP REAL ESTATE AGENTS

1

On Thursday, August 25, 2022, *Chicago* magazine welcomed 150 of Chicago's top-producing agents to Lendlease's Luxury Lakeshore East residence, Cirrus. The invite-only event honored the Chicago-based agents and their teams for their outstanding accomplishments in 2021. Attendees toured the newly finished luxury property and enjoyed bites and cocktails from our generous sponsors Ink Catering, Keeper's Heart, and Pure Chocolate. The pool and terrace were in full swing with music and a 360-degree photo booth for guests to enjoy. Property tours of the amenities and model units were available to all the attendees.

2

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7

1. Christine Lutz and a guest at a model unit at Cirrus. **2.** Keeper's Heart Whiskey tasting station. **3.** The scene at *Chicago* magazine's Top Agents event. **4.** David Wolf (right) of Wolf Development and guests. **5.** Guests reviewing the list of top agents in *Chicago* magazine's August issue. **6.** *Chicago* magazine's Top Agents enjoying the event. **7.** Brisket flatbread by Ink Catering.

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Day After Day

Alexis J. Roston embarks on her second decade of embodying Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill.* By KRIS VIRE

Photograph by JACLYN RIVAS

WHEN ALEXIS J. ROSTON takes the stage as Billie Holiday this month in Mercury Theater Chicago's production of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, she'll be marking a rare milestone: Her sixth run in the demanding role comes 10 years almost to the day after her initial outing, for which she received a Jeff Award in 2013.

"That first time out, I was so scared to do it," Roston says. Rob Lindley, who directed that Porchlight Music Theatre production, had asked her to audition. "'Why?' was my question, because in my mind I sounded nothing like Lady Day," says Roston. "It was like a sheer testament of how much a friend trusts your gift – that you don't even see it, but they thought I could do it."

The play is set a few months before Holiday's 1959 death at age 44. Playwright Lanie Robertson imagines the singer performing to a tiny crowd at the Philadelphia nightclub of the title, high on heroin and only intermittently lucid between songs. Holiday has some light interaction with the onstage musicians, but Robertson's play is essentially a 90-minute monologue interspersed with numbers like "God Bless the Child," "I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone," and "Strange Fruit."

Roston, who in 2013 went by Alexis J. Rogers (she changed her surname after marrying fellow actor Kelvin Roston Jr., with whom she now lives in Chatham, near where she grew up), earned raves for the Porchlight production. Chris Jones, reviewing for the *Tribune*, wrote that "not only does Rogers sound like Holiday, she captures her power, discipline, free spirit and aching vulnerability in roughly equal measures, which is a decidedly tricky cocktail to mix."

Roston reprised her role as Holiday in 2016 at Milwaukee Rep, drawing a kind of backhanded praise from some audience members. "There were people who walked up to the house manager like, 'I can't believe you let your artists go onstage high like that,'" Roston recalls. "Like they really thought that I was high and performing!" She returned to the role for a 2018 Chicago run with Congo Square Theatre, where she's an ensemble member, and has since performed the play at theaters in St. Louis and Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Roston in her original 2013 performance at Porchlight

"Emerson's was not a grand stage. Creating that element of 'This is what she's been reduced to' — that's important to me."

The latest production, staged in Mercury's intimate Venus Cabaret space, marks Roston's first time as codirector, alongside the theater's artistic director, Christopher Chase Carter. "I have, in my mind, taken notes from all of the productions about things that I would have wanted to do," Roston says. That includes creating an environment that feels more like a downmarket tavern than a theater. "Emerson's was not a grand stage. Creating that element of 'This is what she's been reduced to' – that's important to me."

With showgoers seated at cabaret tables in a small room, Roston sees an opportunity for more intimate interactions. "I can engage the audience in a way I've never been able to; I can freely move about the cabin, as we like to say."

Performances are scheduled from January 27 to March 26, but Roston says the run could extend. "We'll play it by ear and see how long people want it." What's not in doubt is that *she* wants it, as her empathy for Holiday has only deepened over the years. "All she ever wanted to do, in my mind, is sing and be loved. I realized once I turned 45 last February, I had surpassed Billie in number of years on this earth. And that gave me an extra push – I was like, Well, I have to do this now. It is my job now to continue Billie's legacy in the best way I know how." ◼

PHOTOGRAPHY: KELSEY JORISSEN. *PREVIOUS PAGE* HAIR BY MARKETA BARNES, MAKEUP BY TIARA TAYLOR

AGENDA

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By KRIS VIRE

FULL-LENGTH LAUGHS

At the venerable comedy showcase Stand Up Stand Up, see local comics moving beyond the “tight five” to honing headliner-length sets. The weekly Wednesday night show recently relocated to the Den Theatre. *Ongoing. thedentheatre.com*

CASSETTE THE SCENE

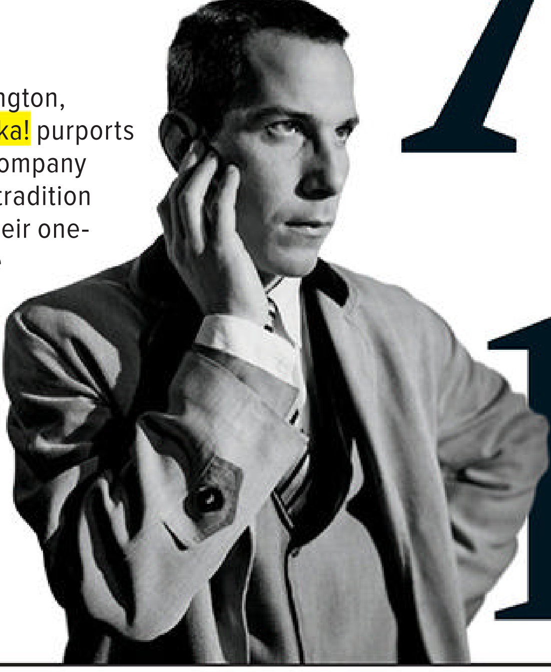
Mixtape, comic illusionist Harrison Lampert’s new show at the Chicago Magic Lounge, promises a mix of close-up magic, improv, and ’90s-kid nostalgia. *Jan. 4–Mar. 29. chicagomagiclounge.com*

ARTISTIC LINEAGE

In a 1999 *Chicago Tribune* obituary for Lawrence Steger, who died that year of AIDS at 37, writer Achy Obejas called him “one of the most important, and most influential, performance artists in Chicago.” A new group show at UIC’s Gallery 400, *Reckless Rolodex*, asks 15 rising Chicago artists to create works in response to Steger’s oeuvre. *Jan. 13–Mar. 18. gallery400.uic.edu*

STEPPING OUT

Founded in 1994, the Washington, D.C.–based troupe Step Afrika! purports to be the first professional company devoted to the Black dance tradition known as stepping. Catch their one-night step—er, stop—at the Auditorium Theatre. *Jan. 14. auditoriumtheatre.org*



TOMORROW’S HERE TODAY

A January tradition since 2005, the multivenue fest Tomorrow Never Knows cues up a few dozen of the next big things in indie music—a first-rate nudge to get out and brave the post-holiday cold. *Jan. 18–22. tnkfest.com*

15 MINUTES IN TEHRAN

In Andy Warhol in Iran, set during the pop artist’s real-life 1976 trip to photograph the shah’s wife, playwright Brent Askari imagines a fictional encounter between Warhol and a young revolutionary. *Jan. 19–Feb. 19. northlight.org*

GLOBAL IMPACT

Relaunched for 2020’s World Music Festival Chicago after an initial run from 1999 to 2004, the Chicago Immigrant Orchestra now comprises 20 members weaving together musical traditions from around the globe. *Jan. 22. evanstonspace.com*

EAR CANDY

Making its first Lyric Opera appearance since 2012, composer Engelbert Humperdinck’s fanciful 1893 take on the Brothers Grimm’s *Hansel and Gretel* could win over opera skeptics of any age. *Jan. 25–Feb. 5. lyricopera.org*

MAKING THE GRADIENT

Shattered Globe Theatre stages the world premiere of *Radial Gradient*, a drama by recent Northwestern graduate Jasmine Sharma that explores the aftereffects of a campus hate crime on three women. *Jan. 27–Mar. 11. sgtheatre.org*

DUKE UNIVERSITY

Celebrated trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra promise the best of Duke Ellington in their latest visit to Symphony Center. *Jan. 28. cso.org*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS: TOMBERLIN) RANDY HOLMES; (*HANSEL AND GRETEL*) MARTY SOHL/METROPOLITAN OPERA; (STEGER) SUSAN ANDERSON; (LAMPERT) SARAH ELIZABETH LARSON

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TABLE

Tavern special and pepperoni pies at Bungalow by Middle Brow

All Hail the Party Cut

Thin-crust, square-cut tavern style is the pizza of the hour.

By PETER GIANOPULOS

Photography by LUCY HEWETT

From left: Studs Terkel from Crust Fund Pizza; Tony Scardino of Professor Pizza

WHILE OUT-OF-TOWN PIZZA STYLES—NAMELY, THOSE HAILING FROM DETROIT, ROME, NEW YORK, AND SICILY—HAVE gotten all the love locally in recent years, it's time for tavern style to regain the spotlight. Chicago's favorite homegrown contribution (sorry, deep dish) is seeing a resurgence, with artisan and cheffy pies leading the comeback. These are four of our favorites.

PIZZA FRIED CHICKEN ICE CREAM

960 W. 31st St., Bridgeport

The take Classic South Side pizzas with a Sicilian soul

The skinny Back in 2018, Cecily and Billy Federighi—with help from neighbor Brad Shorten—started making Sicilian and Neapolitan pizzas in their Ukrainian Village apartment. They baked so many they gave some away on Instagram. Things really clicked in 2020 when Cecily embraced her South Side roots and they started making tavern style. Loose-leaf-thin crust. Breadcrumb bottoms. Slightly "angry" Sicilian-style sauce. Light on the cheese, heavy on the spicy sausage. Pure Bridgeport in a pizza box. Good news for West Siders: You'll also find their pies at Westmont's Kim's Uncle Pizza.

Best order Sausage-mushroom classic (with a Pretty Cool Ice Cream chaser), $28.50

BUNGALOW BY MIDDLE BROW

2840 W. Armitage Ave.,
Logan Square

The take Tuesday-night-only ultra-thin-crust specials—no takeout allowed

The skinny Middle Brow is mostly known for its Neapolitan-ish pies, but on Tuesdays, owner Pete Ternes taps into local tradition. His tavern crust will make your toes curl—made with artisanal Midwestern flour, it's teeming with sourdough and cinnamon notes. That dough gets hit with cornmeal and flattened till it's as thin and crackly as parchment paper. The result? Ethereally light and irresistibly snackable pies dapped with a sauce that's as rich as tomato jam.

Best order The Tavern special topped with sausage, kale, caramelized onions, and an espresso-maple glaze, $19

PROFESSOR PIZZA

Humboldt Park Eatery, 3220 W. Grand Ave., Humboldt Park

The take Unconventional and impossibly crunchy ghost-kitchen pies

The skinny After lecturing about pizzas, apprenticing under pizza masters, and competing in pizza competitions, Tony Scardino has accepted a new challenge: baking the crispiest cracker-style pizza in the 606. The Professor nailed it: His par-baked crusts produce edges so crunchy they'd make a kettle-cooked chip blush. And his use of specialty cheeses (aged mozzarella) and creative toppings (braised leeks and fried rosemary) gleefully gives the middle finger to convention. Keep an eye out for collabs with local chefs like Henry Cai of 3 Little Pigs Chi.

Best order His deluxe pepperoni, with garlic, oregano, whipped ricotta, and hot honey, $27

CRUST FUND PIZZA

Secret location, Ravenswood

The take Tavern pizzas that benefit charity

The skinny John Carruthers, communications manager for Revolution Brewing, insists he's just a philanthropic pizza hobbyist. But his creativity (he's making pies like pastrami and mustard seed on a rye crust) and the quality of his garlic-paprika sausage and lip-smacking sauce spiked with fish sauce say otherwise. In 2020, he began swapping his pies, which you pick up from his alley garage, for $25 donations to local charities (the last pie of the night goes to the highest bidder). Track his monthly pop-up by signing up for his newsletter at nachosandlager.com or following @nachosandlager on Instagram.

Best order The signature sausage-giardiniera pizza, named after a rotating lineup of local writers, like Mike Royko and Studs Terkel, $25

Ask the Dining Editor

Where should I go for date night tomorrow? I've had fantastic date night dinners at Dear Margaret (2965 N. Lincoln Ave., Lake View) and Monteverde (1020 W. Madison St., West Loop), but you're probably not getting in on such short notice. So go grab a reservation for *next month*'s date night. Now for tomorrow … on short notice, I'd pick a bar with great food—one with dim lighting, perfect for cozying up with your date. Scofflaw (3201 W. Armitage Ave., Logan Square), Hopleaf (5148 N. Clark St., Andersonville), and Rootstock (954 N. California Ave., Humboldt Park) have never failed me.

What's the best hangover brunch? I hope you like spicy food, since that's the best cure. Head to Dove's Luncheonette (1545 N. Damen Ave., Wicker Park), where the Back to Life seafood cocktail with tomato-habanero salsa, the burnt-ends hash with fried eggs and Texas toast, and the Bloody Maria should set you right. –AMY CAVANAUGH

Email Amy at acavanaugh@chicagomag.com with your burning dining questions.

ILLUSTRATION: GREG CLARKE

Drinking French

The wine bar and shop Le Midi is an elegant respite in Wicker Park.

By AMY CAVANAUGH

Craig Perman and Seth Wilson

ON A RECENT SATURDAY AFTERNOON AT LE MIDI, THE CROWD WAS mostly tapping away on laptops over coffee, but at 5:30 p.m. the computers snapped shut, couples arrived for date night, and wine and prosciutto hit the tables. Welcome to *l'heure de l'apéro*, Le Midi's reason for being.

"My favorite part of the night is when you first sit down to have a glass of wine and a little bite," says Craig Perman (Perman Wine Selections), who opened Le Midi with sommelier Seth Wilson (Aba, Booth One) in September. "We're taking inspiration from the experiences you have in Europe. You're there with a few other tables, surrounded by the products, and the owners are there telling you about the wines."

You'll find Perman and Wilson doing just that. Their wine program focuses on European offerings, like those of Le Midi, the region in southern France that's bounded by Italy and Spain (the bar's name also nods to the French word for "midday"–its doors open at noon every day but Monday, when it's closed). They emphasize small-production wines, too. "We research the farmer and make sure they are meticulously taking care of the grapes, vines, and facilities," Wilson says.

You can drink onsite, or buy a bottle to take home or to a nearby BYOB like Wazwan. To do Le Midi right, you'll need snacks to go with that wine or spritz, and the menu, conceived by Ashlee Aubin (Pompette) and executed by James Calvin, features cheeses, charcuterie, and bites like crostini with tuna belly, white asparagus, and olive tapenade. Perman and Wilson make sure you also have the option to end your night at Le Midi. "You can come have a glass of amaro or a tea from Rare Tea Cellar and a coffee from Sparrow," Perman says. "That is really important for us, especially in a neighborhood filled with restaurants." *2108 W. Division St., Wicker Park*

Photograph by LUCY HEWETT

REVIEW

Rocky Road

Bambola, a new Silk Road–inspired restaurant from Bonhomme Group, is one misstep after another. By JOHN KESSLER

Braised oxtail

AS FAR AS DESIGN SHOWrooms go, Bambola is a swell place to spend some time. From the antique Pakistani gate framing the entrance and the central Asian suzani tapestries in the front vestibule to the Merchandise Mart–worthy collection of 60 handblown Italian glass chandeliers spanning the vast interior, this is a place that makes you want to drop everything and redecorate.

Upon arrival, you get a leather-bound look book filled with fabric swatches and pages ripped from luxury magazines. But look closely: Somewhere amid the pictures of English garden cottages and ads for Tom Ford eyewear is a menu and an announcement of this establishment's true purpose: Bambola is "an aesthetic and culinary journey along the Silk Road" and an exploration of "the shared cultural heritage that spans from Asia to Europe."

I suppose a team of thoughtful chefs could take this rigmarole and run with it. Uzbek-Greek fusion but with chile crisp? Got it. Could be fun. Yet the food that emerged from this kitchen during my two visits was dreary stuff – as overwrought as you might expect from the mission statement but also prepared without any apparent knowledge of basic cooking techniques.

What makes this all the more confounding is that Bonhomme Group (which owns many other properties in Chicago and Spain under the Beatnik banner) has invested not only money but talent in this, um, restaurant. Corporate executive chef Marcos Campos developed the menus for both the Michelin-starred Porto and the ever-delightful tapas bar Mama Delia. Chef de cuisine Alisha Elenz is a rising star whose previous work at MFK was nominated for two James Beard Awards, in 2019 and 2020. I'm sure they both know how to roast carrots, braise beef, and prepare fried rice without handfuls of salt and weird little gristly bits that leave you too

Photography by LUCY HEWETT

wary for another bite. Yet somehow their kitchen fails every test put before it.

The front of the house has its problems as well. One night we show up on time for our reservation and are offered a choice of seats at the bar or at one end of an empty communal table in a side room – more Siberia than Silk Road. The unfortunately saddled servers must recite boilerplate language about the "journey" we're about to undertake, "traveling from Asia to Europe, East to West," like it's going to be just us and an intrepid donkey.

Yet they're also quick with reassurances that this trek won't be too taxing on the palate. "That tomato cocktail tastes like a strawberry daiquiri," a cheerful young waiter tells us as we check out the drink list from partner Brian Sturgulewski and the Bonhomme beverage team. The cocktails go heavy on savory ingredients but hedge their bets with extra sugar. A coffee and fig concoction looks smashing in an ibrik copper pot with a smoldering cinnamon stick but leaves me thirsty for a properly bittersweet espresso martini, while a kind of clear shiitake sumpin-sumpin is like drinking chilled Bénédictine with a lingering hot pot aftertaste.

BAMBOLA
[NO STARS]
1402 W. Randolph St., West Loop
■ **Dinner for two** $200 to $300
■ **Tip** If you want to check out the designery scene, go for dessert after having dinner elsewhere.

★ Recommended
★★ Very good ★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Exceptional

When we settle into a fine bottle of wine (a Ribolla Gialla from the excellent Slovenian producer Movia), things start looking up – that is, until the food arrives. It is so perplexing. How do you cook carrots for an appetizer so that they're charred but uncuttable, and how do you find such starchy, flavorless ones in the height of their season? Why muck up a decent enough beet and freekeh salad with a chalky hummus dialed down with canned-tasting artichoke?

The menu makes a big deal about its Josper oven, a high-end device fired by hardwood charcoal, and yet I'm not convinced the kitchen knows how to use it. Smoked "lambchetta" is nothing like porchetta – no crunchy skin, no sense that it was rolled with aromatics and tied, just random chunks of tough, fatty meat in a fast-separating and unseasoned sauce. (Mixing a bit of the salt-lick fried rice into it helped.) It comes with two squares of stale focaccia that the server calls "Italian bread." But seriously: This bouncy lamb needed 30 minutes in an Instant Pot to be palatable.

To describe the lobster spaghetti (the $64 lobster spaghetti, mind you), I must banish all metaphors from my mind and say it arrives in a kind of broken, grease-oozing, mysteriously chunky, dun-colored smoked tomato curry sauce with large pieces of rawish lobster and charred yet raw Broccolini. Oh, and black lime breadcrumbs that cover it like ash. Kudos to the server who noticed how little of the spaghetti or the grease bomb of the braised oxtails (I'll let you imagine that one) we ate and took them off the bill. I watched her explain our problems to a floor manager, who just nodded curtly and never paid us a visit. That tracks.

The only bright spot is Shannah Primiano's dessert menu. The list of ingredients in each dish sounds like the contents of the donkey's saddlebag after making it through the Caucasus, but her creations are witty and fun to eat. A dessert called Trade combines gold phyllo paper, Lapsang Souchong syrup, mulberry and eggplant jam, pomegranate molasses, nougat glacé, and goat cheese. It is delightful and tastes nothing like baba ghanoush.

Good sweets aside, the trade winds do not seem to be blowing the right way for Bambola. I strongly suspect things are a mess behind the scenes, and certainly today's environment – where it can be so hard to hire, train, and retain employees – doesn't help. Still, I don't have much sympathy for the Bonhomme folks. They should fix this place before bringing in paying guests. They want a lot of money for this journey, but there are far better roads to travel.

Dosa and thali

NEIGHBORHOOD FIND

Lunch Bunch

MADHURA CAFE
20534 Milwaukee Ave., Deerfield
■ **Perfect order** The daily thali

■ Every morning just before lunchtime my phone lights up with a message from Madhura Cafe's WhatsApp group chat about the restaurant's daily thali. And every day it occasions such an intense hunger pang that I consider making the 30-minute drive from my house to the little strip mall in Deerfield where the restaurant resides.

Madhura Cafe, a South Indian snack shop with a dining room as plain as could be, serves the kind of food an expat from Chennai might crave. Open since August, it is slowly getting off the ground, and the specials change day to day. During lunch, you can get the $10 thali or a tiffin filled with items like a dosa with chutney and sambar or poori with potato masala. Tiffins are also available on weekends starting at 7 a.m. (serving breakfast is a rarity for Indian spots in the area).

But wowza, that thali — so generous it fills two plastic cafeteria trays — is some delicious home-cooked Tamil soul food. Among the dozen disposable bowls may be a dry okra peanut curry, a spinach and chayote dal, and paneer in tomato gravy. Sometimes there is a meat option, perhaps chile chicken for an extra dollar. There will be sambar soup, housemade pickles, papad, and a mound of rice to feed a family. And something fun, like spicy mini samosas or a handful of the colorful crackers called Fryums.

Also fantastic: the thinnest, crispiest dosas in Illinois ($7.99) and tangy steamed cakes, idly ($5.99), with mint-coconut chutney and brilliantly sour rasam soup for dipping. God, I'm starving. Who's in?
– JOHN KESSLER

IN THE KITCHEN

Good as Gold

HERE'S A GET-RICH-QUICK SCHEME WE should all get behind on Lunar New Year: dumplings. "People say the more you eat during New Year time, the more money you will make next year," says Jesse Li of the Chinatown dumpling authority Qing Xiang Yuan. Li credits the tasty little pockets' auspiciousness to their shape, said to resemble ancient gold ingots. Try your luck this Lunar New Year (January 22) with Li's version, which features a juicy, ginger-perfumed pork filling and a time-saving assist from frozen wrappers (available at most grocery stores). Whether or not you make bank, a plate heaped with these golden beauties is a very rich thing indeed.

—CATE HUGUELET

QING XIANG YUAN'S PORK DUMPLINGS

Makes About 60 dumplings
Active time 40 minutes
Total time 1 hour

1	lb. ground pork
2	Tbsp. soy sauce
¼	tsp. Shaoxing cooking wine
2	tsp. chicken bouillon powder (like Lee Kum Kee brand)
¾	tsp. salt
4¼	tsp. vegetable oil, plus more for cooking
½	tsp. sesame oil
4	tsp. grated ginger
1	tsp. sugar
2	packages Chinese dumpling wrappers, defrosted but cold
2	Tbsp. plus ¾ tsp. cornstarch

1

Make the filling: In a medium bowl, gently combine first 10 ingredients along with ¾ cup water.

2

Assemble dumplings: Lay a dumpling wrapper flat and use your finger to rub a little water around the edge. Place a heaping teaspoon of filling in the center and bring the bottom up over the filling, pinching at the top to seal. To finish shaping, hold the dumpling's base between your thumbs and fingertips. Use your index fingers to sweep the wrapper's outer corners away from you and up to the top of the dumpling, pinching to seal. The wrapper should form a pouch. Set dumpling aside and repeat until all the filling has been used.

3

Fry dumplings: Stir together the cornstarch and 1 cup of water in a small bowl. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large, lidded skillet over medium heat until it shimmers. Add a single layer of dumplings and cook for 2 minutes, swirling the pan to prevent sticking. Pour in about 3 tablespoons of the cornstarch mixture, cover, and increase the heat to medium-high. Steam until filling is fully cooked and dumplings are golden brown underneath, 5 to 6 minutes. Repeat with remaining dumplings.

Photograph by LUCY HEWETT

The Hot List

10 places everyone's talking about (in order of heat)

Brown butter Dutch baby

1 **POMPETTE** **What** A breezy Bucktown café and wine bar from a trio of industry pros who met working at Wood. **Why** It's open all day for French- and Italian-inspired fare, so get going with a brown butter Dutch baby or a yogurt parfait with honey and Stellar granola. Or head in for dinner, when Aaron Patten serves charcuterie boards, crab croquettes, and seared scallops with kohlrabi-fennel salad alongside Old World natural wines. **Where** *1960 N. Damen Ave., Bucktown*

2 **YARDBIRD** **What** Southern comfort eats (and lots of bourbon) from a lauded national restaurant group **Why** Order the house special chicken and waffles with honey hot sauce or a fried green tomato BLT with pimento cheese while sipping an old-fashioned. **Where** *530 N. Wabash Ave., Near North Side*

3 **PLANTA QUEEN** **What** A local outpost of the vibrant national vegan chain **Why** The globally influenced all-day menu features an array of bites like potato-truffle dumplings and eggplant nigiri with miso truffle. **Where** *413 N. Clark St., Near North Side*

4 **IRENE'S** **What** An upscale diner from the team behind the Press Room, a West Loop wine bar **Why** Find twists on classics, like a short rib Benedict or cookies and cream pancakes. **Where** *2012 W. Irving Park Rd., North Center*

5 **LONGMAN & EAGLE** **What** The Logan Square staple gets a new chef, Brian Motyka (Rose Mary, Spiaggia). **Why** Motyka adds his stamp to the menu with dishes like kabocha squash tortellini with foie gras butter and Burrata with grape mostarda and focaccia. **Where** *2657 N. Kedzie Ave., Logan Square*

6 **SOUL FOOD LOUNGE** **What** Modern takes on soul food favorites from chef Quentin Love (Turkey Chop) **Why** Love serves up Korean-style rib tips and fried pork chops with sweet chile sauce. **Where** *3804 W. 16th St., Lawndale*

7 **ENTRÉE** **What** A pickup and delivery outfit that offers finish-at-home meal kits from noted chefs **Why** Try menus created by chefs including Stephen Gillanders (S.K.Y.), with mushroom risotto with a side of lemon-garlic asparagus. **Where** *1639 S. Wabash Ave., South Loop*

8 **HEFFER BBQ** **What** A central Texas barbecue pop-up from a husband-and-wife duo **Why** This city always needs more options for great brisket, and you can find Heffer at pop-ups at bars around Chicago. **Where** *Follow @therealhefferbbq on Instagram for information on the next pop-up.*

9 **TASA COFFEE ROASTERS** **What** A microroastery slinging Latin-inspired drinks and bites **Why** Grab a coconut-lavender latte to go, or settle in with your laptop over an avocado-chorizo toast. **Where** *4136 W. North Ave., Hermosa*

10 **THE GREEN POST** **What** A British café from the team behind the Northman and Bar on Buena **Why** Look for savory pies to start the morning, and a crisp sandwich with cheddar later on. **Where** *4749 N. Rockwell St., Lincoln Square*

PHOTOGRAPH: REILLY DREW

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Into the Lyons Den

The author moved to Chicago to pursue a career in standup comedy. He was in for a rude awakening. By MIKE BRIDENSTINE

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE LYONS DEN CAME in late summer 2003. I had just turned 24 and, as a recent graduate of the University of Iowa, was looking for a job in Chicago. But with a communications degree and no real employable skills or life experience to speak of, the only offers I received were from a suburban Chevy dealership managed by my friend's dad and a shady pyramid scheme masquerading as an advertising company. I went with the "advertising company" since I didn't know anything about cars. Or pyramid schemes.

After my interview, where the only question I was asked was whether I considered myself a leader or a follower (I said a leader, thank you very much), I rushed down the Kennedy Expressway to the Irving Park exit, glancing frantically at the directions I'd written on a napkin, because I was already late to sign up for a comedy open mic at the Den.

I parked on a side street and started running toward the bar, still in my interview suit. When I arrived, I was almost positive I was in the wrong place. Through the front windows, it looked more like a dive bar on a slow night than the "big open mic" I'd been promised. I was greeted by the person who had told me about it, Mike Holmes.

"The show already started," he said. "And there are already like 35 comics on the list."

"Where's the show?" I asked, feeling more confused than disappointed. And did he say thirty-fucking-five comics?

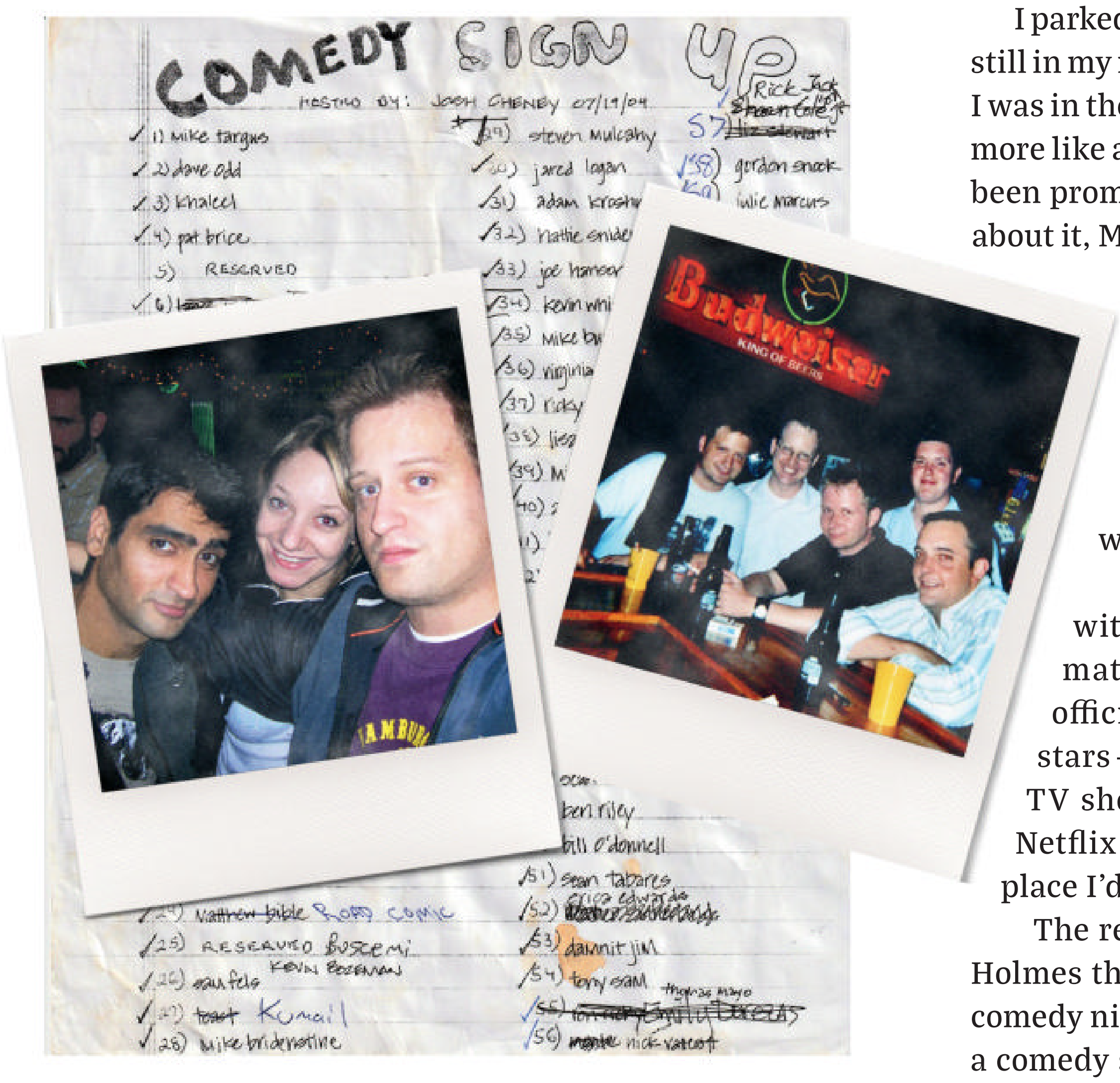
"Back there." He pointed. "There's a big room with a stage."

Unbeknownst to me, back there in the big room with the stage were people who would be my roommates, my lifelong friends, and the best man and officiant at my wedding. Back there were also future stars – comedians who would get their own movies and TV shows and specials on HBO, Comedy Central, and Netflix (which barely existed in 2003). It would be the first place I'd ever truly fit in.

The reason I was here in the first place was that I'd met Holmes the previous summer in Iowa City, where I hosted a comedy night at a campus bar called the Summit. If there was a comedy scene in Iowa City to speak of then, it consisted of just me, Holmes, and, like, one or two other dudes. We all loved Mitch Hedberg and Dave Attell, we'd all seen the Jerry Seinfeld documentary *Comedian* a thousand times, and we would all make monthly treks to Penguin's Comedy Club in Cedar Rapids to do its open mic. Where we would crush, I'd like to add. At least in our own minds.

Holmes and I decided to move to Chicago together to keep pursuing careers in comedy. And even though Holmes had heard good things about this particular Monday open mic from his sister's boyfriend, I had no real reason to assume it would be any different from Penguin's. Boy, was I wrong.

Stars-in-the-making like Kumail Nanjiani (left, with future wife and collaborator Emily V. Gordon and the author) were regulars at the Lyons Den, which closed in 2004 after one last mammoth open mic night.
↓



COMEDY SIGN UP
HOSTED BY: JOSH CHENEY 07/19/04
✓ 1) mike targus
✓ 2) dave odd
✓ 3) khaleel
✓ 4) pat brice
5) RESERVED
✓ 6)
✓ 24) ~~mathew bible~~ Ross comic
✓ 25) RESERVED Buscemi
✓ 26) sean fels Kevin Bozeman
✓ 27) ~~toast~~ Kumail
✓ 28) mike bridenstine
✓ 29) steven mulcahy
✓ 30) jared logan
✓ 31) adam krosh
✓ 32) nathie snide
✓ 33) joe hanso
✓ 34) kevin whi
✓ 35) Mike bu
✓ 36) virginia
✓ 37) ricky
✓ 38) lies
ben riley
bill o'donnell
✓ 51) sean tabares
✓ 52) erica edwards
✓ 53) damnit jim
✓ 54) tony sam
✓ 55) thomas mayo
✓ 56) nick vatcott
57) Rick Jack ~~liz stewart~~
✓ 58) gordon snook
59) julie marcus

PHOTOGRAPHY: (SHEET) JOSH CHENEY; (INSET PHOTOS) MIKE BRIDENSTINE

As I settled into my seat in the backroom of the Den, the 30-something host, a guy named Robert Buscemi, was onstage wearing a plain white T-shirt, dress pants, and dark-rimmed glasses. His voice had a hint of a Southern twang.

"I'm aware most of you are here tonight because you follow my blog," he started, laying the absurdist irony on thick. "And I appreciate that. For those who don't know, my blog fans divide themselves into two warring factions. One faction believes firmly that my best feature is my gossamer-soft body hair. Their rivals in the other camp argue with equal vigor that my best quality is my vestigial tail."

The crowd was loving every second of it. Like, this shit was killing, but I had absolutely no idea why. I'd never even seen a hipster before. For the last year, I'd been watching mostly hack road comics doing the same borrowed or dated material in Iowa City, and now this Buscemi guy was talking about vestigial tails and gossamer-soft body hair? It just didn't make any sense to me.

"Now, I personally believe that my best quality is my world-class Hamburglar drinking glass collection," Buscemi continued. "But what do I know? I'm only the most innovative comedian that you'll ever see."

A little later in the night, a young, unibrowed Pakistani guy went up and absolutely destroyed with a joke about a bassoon. I specifically remember thinking that he could have picked any musical instrument and the joke still would have worked, but he picked a bassoon because it has the funniest name. This guy was good.

Since I'd missed the beginning of the show, I asked Holmes if that comedian, who had been introduced only as Kumail, was the best of the night so far. "Him or that guy over there," he said, pointing to a tall, blond guy who also seemed to be around our age. "His name is Holmes, too. Pete Holmes."

Not long after Kumail performed, a large and intimidating guy named Steve O. Harvey was introduced, accompanied by Darth Vader's theme song. And once he was onstage, he challenged everyone in the audience to a thumb-wrestling contest. There were a handful of takers, and one by one, he defeated them all easily, laughing maniacally the whole time. That was the entirety of his act. The crowd loved it.

I'd been watching mostly hack road comics doing the same borrowed or dated material in Iowa City, and now this Buscemi guy was talking about vestigial tails and gossamer-soft body hair? It just didn't make any sense to me.

By the time he went up, 25th or 26th on the list, Mike Holmes was convinced he needed to have an intro song picked out for his performance. I suggested it was possible that the DJ just decided himself what to play, the way DJs do, but Holmes was adamant about selecting his own song. And when he requested "No Rain" by Blind Melon, Josh Cheney, the way-too-skinny kid in the suit working the sound booth, gave him a dirty look before he begrudgingly agreed to play it.

The song didn't help. After he was introduced by Buscemi, Holmes launched into a pretty straightforward bit about driving his car with his mother in the passenger seat. It had worked the handful of times he'd told it in Iowa in front of friends. But it died a slow, painful death that night in Chicago, suffocated by a pillow of silence. The next joke suffered a similar fate. And by the time Holmes got to his closer about Indiana Jones, which had been absolutely bulletproof in Iowa, most of the audience had already tuned him out.

"I bombed," Holmes recalls now. And when I disagree and try to downgrade his "bomb" to a "soft set," Holmes clarifies that it felt like a bomb because it was the first time he hadn't done well.

After the open mic, we went back to his sister's apartment in Roscoe Village, where we were staying. Holmes was demoralized, and I remember sitting with him on the front stoop and having to talk him out of bailing on our Chicago plans (I told you I was a leader). And now that I think about it, it's probably a good thing that I didn't also perform that first night at the Den. Because I definitely would have bombed, and we might have aborted everything. Luckily, from the safety of my nonbomb, I got to give a pep talk and remind Holmes that Chicago was impossibly huge. There was still sketch and improv comedy for us to try. And, most importantly, there were probably a thousand other standup shows and open mics just like that one, scattered all throughout the city – but without the eccentric weirdos talking about the fucking Hamburglar.

We didn't show up at the Den again for five more months. And it slightly pains me to think of what I almost missed. In and around the same time, some of the people who would go on to become the best comedians of their generation would pass through that stage: Pete Holmes, Kumail Nanjiani, Hannibal Buress, T.J. Miller, Tommy Johnagin, Nate Bargatze, Nick Vatterott, Pat Brice, and Kyle Kinane all performed at the Lyons Den open mic on a regular basis. At some point, George Carlin dropped in just to watch. And when John Roy won *Star Search* earlier in 2003, he shouted out the Lyons Den in his victory interview with Arsenio Hall. It's entirely possible that the Den, which closed in the summer of 2004, had the greatest open mic in the history of American comedy.

If the Chicago scene had a center, that was it. And I'd unknowingly just entered into it one night wearing my stupid interview suit.

OUR 30 FAVORITE THINGS TO EAT RIGHT NOW

FROM OVER-THE-TOP BANANA BREAD TO SPICED CAMBODIAN BEEF SKEWERS, THESE ARE THE DISHES WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF.

By CARLY BOERS,
AMY CAVANAUGH,
PETER GIANOPULOS,
CATE HUGUELET,
JOHN KESSLER,
TITUS RUSCITTI, and
AUDARSHIA TOWNSEND

Dark Chocolate and Pecan Banana Bread at Mindy's Bakery

For banana bread to make any best-of list, it's got to be next level. Leave it to Mindy Segal. Her cakey offering comes in thick slabs, each swirled with a wide ribbon of bittersweet fudge and finished with pecan-studded streusel. *$5. 1623 N. Milwaukee Ave., Bucktown* –C.B.

YAKI BEEF GYOZA AT MONSTER RAMEN

Chef-owner Katie Dong makes some of the juiciest fried dumplings in town at her new ramen joint. Each one of these ground-beef-stuffed delights takes a trip to the griddle and comes out perfectly crisped. The filling, which also includes ginger, garlic, and cabbage, delivers an explosion of flavors and textures. *$7.95. 3435 W. Fullerton Ave., Logan Square* –T.R.

CHICKEN DIAVOLA AT CODA DI VOLPE

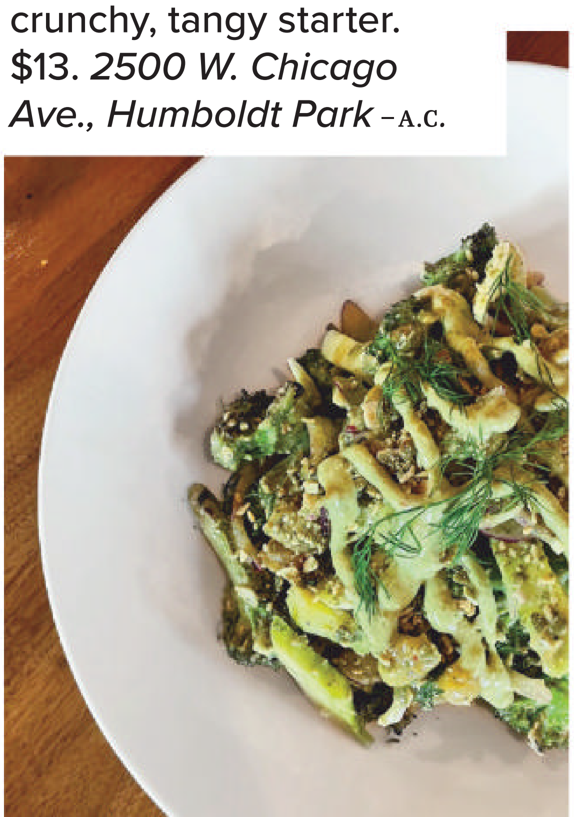
When you find a roast chicken that speaks to you, it can be hard ordering anything else. For some of us, that's the quandary at this restaurant better known for its pizzas and pastas. Its burnished half bird arrives trailing a scent of sweet smoke from the wood-burning oven, and its skin crackles with the flavors of its Calabrian chile and honey glaze. Fantastic pooled juices on the plate soak into roasted potatoes and spears of Broccolini. *$26. 3335 N. Southport Ave., Lake View* –J.K.

Purple Velvet Cupcake at Jennivee's Bakery

Red velvet owes its existence to a bottle of food coloring. Purple velvet relies on the charms of ube, the Filipino sweet potato that has a vanilla-like flavor. Gobs of ube mousse and young coconut make this a frosting lover's dream. *$5.50. 3301 N. Sheffield Ave., Lake View* –J.K.

CHARRED BROCCOLI SALAD AT SPLIT-RAIL

If a broccoli, onion, and raisin salad makes you nostalgic for picnics as a kid—and even if it doesn't—you have to try Alex Gonzalez's fancy twist on the retro staple. He chills charred broccoli, then tosses it with dill, shaved red onion, pickled raisins, and a creamy pepita dressing for a crunchy, tangy starter. $13. *2500 W. Chicago Ave., Humboldt Park* –A.C.



Ceci Bean Cavatelli at Boeufhaus

When Boeufhaus reopened after an extended COVID closure, we beelined back for a dry-aged rib eye but left dreaming about this under-the-radar pasta. Brian Ahern dresses chickpea flour pasta with housemade merguez sausage, fried chickpeas, smoked paprika jus, and grated tangy caciocavallo cheese for a pasta that's the ideal way to start a meal here. *$18. 1012 N. Western Ave., Humboldt Park* –A.C.

MEJILLONES AT TZUCO

Carlos Gaytán has a way of making even the simplest dishes seem special. Take his mussels, which come in a decadent saffron beurre blanc, with nubs of dried chorizo and pickled jalapeño adding some richness and tang. The bowl includes warm pieces of housemade sourdough to soak up every last bit of broth. *$24. 720 N. State St., Near North Side* –A.C.

PHOTOGRAPHY: *PREVIOUS SPREAD* JEFF MARINI; THIS SPREAD (CHICKEN) JEFF MARINI; (CAVATELLI) ABEL URIBE/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (MEJILLONES) NEIL BURGER; (BROCCOLI) WHITNEY LaMORA; (CUPCAKE) JENNIVEE'S BAKERY; (QUINN, SANDWICH) JEFF MARINI

Wood-Grilled Berbere-Spiced Carrots at Eden

Jodi Fyfe and Devon Quinn moved their restaurant from the West Loop to Avondale this year, allowing them to expand an onsite greenhouse – and their menu. For this can't-miss savory-sweet side dish, Quinn seasons carrots with berbere, the Ethiopian spice blend, then adds a goat cheese purée, honey, and ricotta salata. *$12. 2734 W. Roscoe St., Avondale* – A.T.

CHICKEN SANDWICH AT NINE BAR

In a landscape dominated by fried chicken sandwiches, Elvis Mom's grilled version stands out. His Cambodian-influenced offering features a ginger-lemongrass thigh topped with green papaya slaw and tucked into a brioche bun that's swiped with some spicy mayo. It's light, fresh, and just the right thing to snack on with some of the bar's tropical-inspired drinks. *$14. 216 W. Cermak Rd., Chinatown* – A.C.

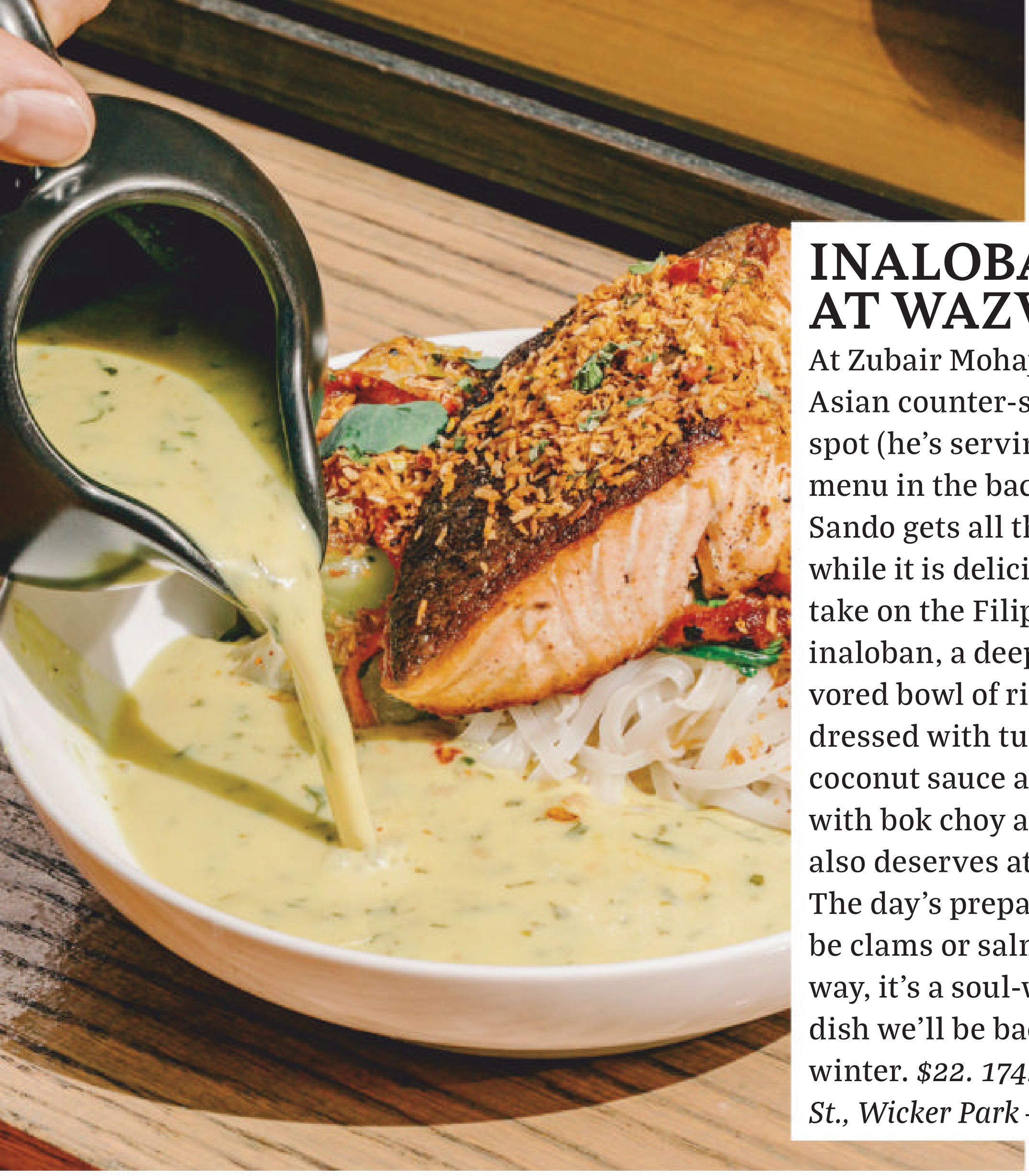
NOT YOUR EVERYDAY CAPRESE AT BAZAAR MEAT

José Andrés has miniaturized all four components of his caprese salad so they fit snugly onto one spoon. A jiggly pearl of liquefied mozzarella, a basil-blasted schmear of pesto, a partially dehydrated cherry tomato, and a postage-stamp-size pita chip. Slurped like a cold oyster, in one glorious spoonful, it's cuter, creamier, squishier, crunchier, and more ingenious than any caprese that's come before. *$15. 120 N. Wacker Dr., Loop* –P.G.

Wood-Roasted Salmon at the Graceful Ordinary

Chris Curren's salmon is pure alchemy. Its skin is crispy as karaage, while its flesh is supple as conservas. How does he do it? Two baptisms by fire: first seared on an open-hearth grill, then finished in a wood-fired oven to seal in all its precious oils and omega-3s. The result, served with lemon brown butter, Old Bay okra, and celery root purée, smolders with unctuousness. *$29. 3 E. Main St., St. Charles* –P.G.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CAPRESE) JOSÉ ANDRÉS GROUP; (SALMON) JEFF MARINI



INALOBAN AT WAZWAN

At Zubair Mohajir's South Asian counter-service spot (he's serving a tasting menu in the back), the THC Sando gets all the love. And while it is delicious, his take on the Filipino dish inaloban, a deeply flavored bowl of rice noodles dressed with turmeric-coconut sauce and topped with bok choy and seafood, also deserves attention. The day's preparation may be clams or salmon – either way, it's a soul-warming dish we'll be back for this winter. *$22. 1742 W. Division St., Wicker Park* –A.C.

Chicories at Peanut Park Trattoria

This towering salad, loaded with veggies and bitter greens like radicchio, escarole, frisée, and fennel, is a refreshing dish to pair with the restaurant's pastas. Or come just for it: With an anchovy vinaigrette, grated Parm, and a shower of toasted breadcrumbs, it has a delightful crunch and a punch of umami. *$14. 1359 W. Taylor St., Little Italy* –A.C.

Sach Ko Ang at Khmai Cambodian Fine Dining

The menu at this newcomer is filled with wonderfully fragrant dishes, but none stimulate your senses quite like the barbecue beef, which mother and daughter Sarom Sieng and Mona Sang make with small chunks of rib eye coated in lemongrass, red chiles, and the Cambodian spice paste kroeung. When the beef skewers hit the fire, they get a hint of smoke that perfumes the entire room—and, yes, they taste even better than they smell. *$13. 2043 W. Howard St., Rogers Park* –T.R.

TACO AL PASTOR AT RUBI'S

Nearly two years after the pandemic ended Rubi's two-decade-plus run at Maxwell Street Market, the beloved taco stall was reborn as an 18th Street brick-and-mortar. Sure, the new digs are slicker than the rough-and-ready original, but the taco al pastor – crispy, charcoal kissed, cradled as ever in a hearty hand-pressed tortilla – leaves no doubt that substance continues to reign over style. *$6. 1316 W. 18th St., Pilsen* –C.H.

Army Stew at New Village Gastro Pub

During the Korean War, resourceful cooks devised this ingenious hot pot with ingredients scrounged from U.S. Army commissaries. Spam, bacon, ham, and cut-up hot dogs keep company with kimchi and onions in a chile-hot broth. A brick of ramen noodles juts out, and American cheese melts on top of the bubbling stew. It's a soft jazz symphony of umami. *$24.99. 3566 Milwaukee Ave., Northbrook* –J.K.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (INALOBAN) JEFF MARINI; (CHICORIES) JACLYN RIVAS; (STEW) LUCY HEWETT; (TACOS) ERIN HOOLEY/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (SKEWERS) KHMAI FINE DINING

Yuk Hwe at Parachute

When chefs Beverly Kim and Johnny Clark reopened with a wholly new menu, they swapped out the creative Korean-inspired dishes for classics from the canon made with ultrapremium ingredients. You won't find a better version of this traditional beef tartare. The slivers of Slagel Family Farm top round are served just shy of freezing, and as the marinade melts on your tongue, the flavors – white soy, local honey, pickled ramps, the most astonishing sesame oil – come brilliantly alive. $30. *3500 N. Elston Ave., Avondale* – J.K.

LEEK GRAMIGNE AT SEGNATORE

Matt Troost has shattered the record for the most Chicago-inspired Easter eggs ever sneaked into a bowl of pasta. His black-and-green gramigne pasta – made with raw and charred leeks – represents our city's parks and skyscrapers. The tufts of short rib scream stockyards. His vermouth sauce is a two-martini lunch. And the cured egg yolk, grated atop it all like Parmesan? No symbolism, just unadulterated umami love. *$25. 1001 N. California Ave., Humboldt Park* – P.G.

SALADE LYONNAISE CANARD AT OBÉLIX

Oliver Poilevey so loves duck that he devoted an entire section of his French menu to it. No dish better represents the restaurant than this smart update of a classic, where the frisée salad arrives outfitted with a softly poached duck egg, shreds of fat-crisped duck confit, and duck-fat-fried croutons. It's quacking unbelievable. *$19. 700 N. Sedgwick St., River North* – J.K.

Quail at El Che Steakhouse & Bar

John Manion has long been known as a guy who knows his way around a steak, but it turns out he knows his way around quail too. Manion grills spice-rubbed birds, tosses them in red chimichurri, and tops them with sweet giardiniera from J.P. Graziano. He serves them over a giardiniera aïoli and drizzled with a pepper and herb honey for a dish that's tangy and sweet. *$32. 845 W. Washington Blvd., West Loop* – A.C.

Curry Beef Roti at D's Roti & Trini Cuisine

Dawn Lewis started serving her terrific version of the burrito-like roti, the most iconic dish on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago, as a pop-up before opening a Bronzeville ghost kitchen in March. Lewis wraps flatbread around a bulging filling of spiced potatoes, chickpeas, and tender chunks of beef that's been simmered in a savory curry gravy. *$16. 2537 S. Wabash Ave., Bronzeville* – T.R.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (YUK HWE) MATT HAAS; (SALAD) JEFF MARINI; (ROTI) DAWN LEWIS; (QUAIL) JEFF MARINI; (LEEKS) KIM KOVACIK

Catfish Po' Boy at Daisy's Po-Boy and Tavern

The classic New Orleans sandwich gets the Erick Williams treatment at the chef's newest restaurant. Williams serves nine different versions, but don't miss the catfish one. It has two crispy fillets dressed with a spicy Cajun slaw and rémoulade that provide the perfect amount of heat. *$14.99 for 6 inch; $28.99 for 12 inch. 5215 S. Harper Ave., Hyde Park* –A.T.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BOUGATSA, CATFISH) JEFF MARINI

BOUGATSA AT LYRA

Lyra's flashy take on Greece's favorite breakfast pastry could've been Instagram gimmickry. Servers smash two balloon-shaped husks of inflated phyllo, smooshing the shards into hidden layers of cinnamon ice cream and semolina custard. It's quite a show, but it's the interplay of textures and decadent flavors—think cinnamon roll à la mode—that'll make you scream "Opa!" *$18. 905 W. Fulton Market, West Loop* –P.G.

BABA AU RHUM AT THE LOYALIST

Nothing makes diners sit up and pay attention quite like a little fire, and the flaming baba au rhum here tastes just as striking as it looks. Executive pastry chef Karen Urie Shields makes a brioche round that's served basking in crème anglaise and set on fire at the table (with help from the overproof rum). A dish of chantilly cream comes alongside, to add some creaminess to each bite. *$16. 177 N. Ada St., West Loop* –A.C.

Lunchroom Butter Cookie Ice Cream at Shawn Michelle's Homemade Ice Cream

This scoop plays to the nostalgia of Chicagoans who attended public school between the 1960s and 1980s, when homey, humble cookies marked with three fingerprints were a favorite treat at cafeterias around the city. But even if you don't fit the profile, the combination of tender butter cookie crumbles and ultracreamy custard-style ice cream will delight your inner child. *$6.60 for a single. 46 E. 47th St., Bronzeville; 3252 Vollmer Rd., Olympia Fields* –C.H.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BABA AU RHUM, ICE CREAM) JEFF MARINI

Spare Ribs Cheung Fun at Ying Dim Sum

These floppy rice crepes, which arrive filled with spare rib and splashed with a soy-based sauce, are a staple of dim sum parlors. At this casual spot in the food court of 88 Marketplace, they're wonderfully different—crinkly instead of smooth so they hold the sauce and ripple on your palate. *$7.49. 2105 S. Jefferson St., Pilsen* –J.K.

LIVE EEL AT HOLU

While this Asian tabletop-grill steakhouse serves the best wagyu beef from around the world, it also offers a selection of premium seafood, including this rarely seen and insanely delicious choice. The eel meets its fate in the kitchen and comes to the table filleted and cut into inchlong pieces. Once they hit the hot barbecue grate, they curl up and the salted skin crisps into a kind of piscine potato chip. *$45 for half eel; $86 for whole. 2101 S. Jefferson St., Pilsen* –J.K.

Nam Tok Kor Moo Yang at Immm Rice & Beyond

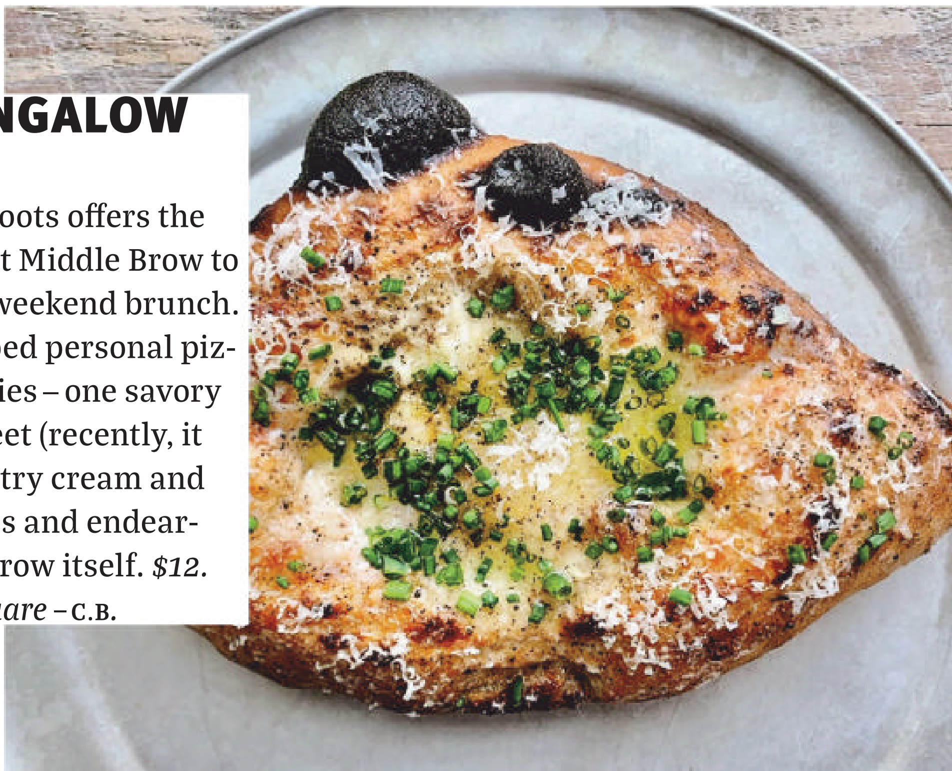
If you're a Thai restaurant–goer, then you know nam tok, a salad dressed with tangy fish sauce and featuring slices of just-cooked beef. You probably also know moo yang—barbecued pork skewers, a popular street food. Now you need to try this dish, which combines the two: a salad made with craveably crisp and fatty slices of pork collar, with veggies for crunch and roasted rice powder for nuttiness. *$14.50. 4949 N. Broadway, Uptown* –J.K.

BREAKFAST DOSA HASH AT SUPERKHANA INTERNATIONAL

Savory breakfast people, raise your hands. There's no better way to start the day than with this mash-up of Indian, Sichuan, and diner food. The glossy, brittle crepe of rice and lentil flour holds spiced cabbage and potato hash, and it comes with a sunny-side-up egg and a nice dollop of chile crisp. *$16. 3059 W. Diversey Ave., Logan Square* –J.K.

KHACHAPURI AT BUNGALOW BY MIDDLE BROW

This bread dish with Georgian roots offers the ideal vessel for the visionaries at Middle Brow to work their sourdough magic at weekend brunch. Treat khachapuri like boat-shaped personal pizzas, and choose from two varieties – one savory and eggy, the other skewing sweet (recently, it was stuffed with sweet corn pastry cream and funky chèvre). Both are delicious and endearingly offbeat – just like Middle Brow itself. *$12. 2840 W. Armitage Ave., Logan Square* –C.B.

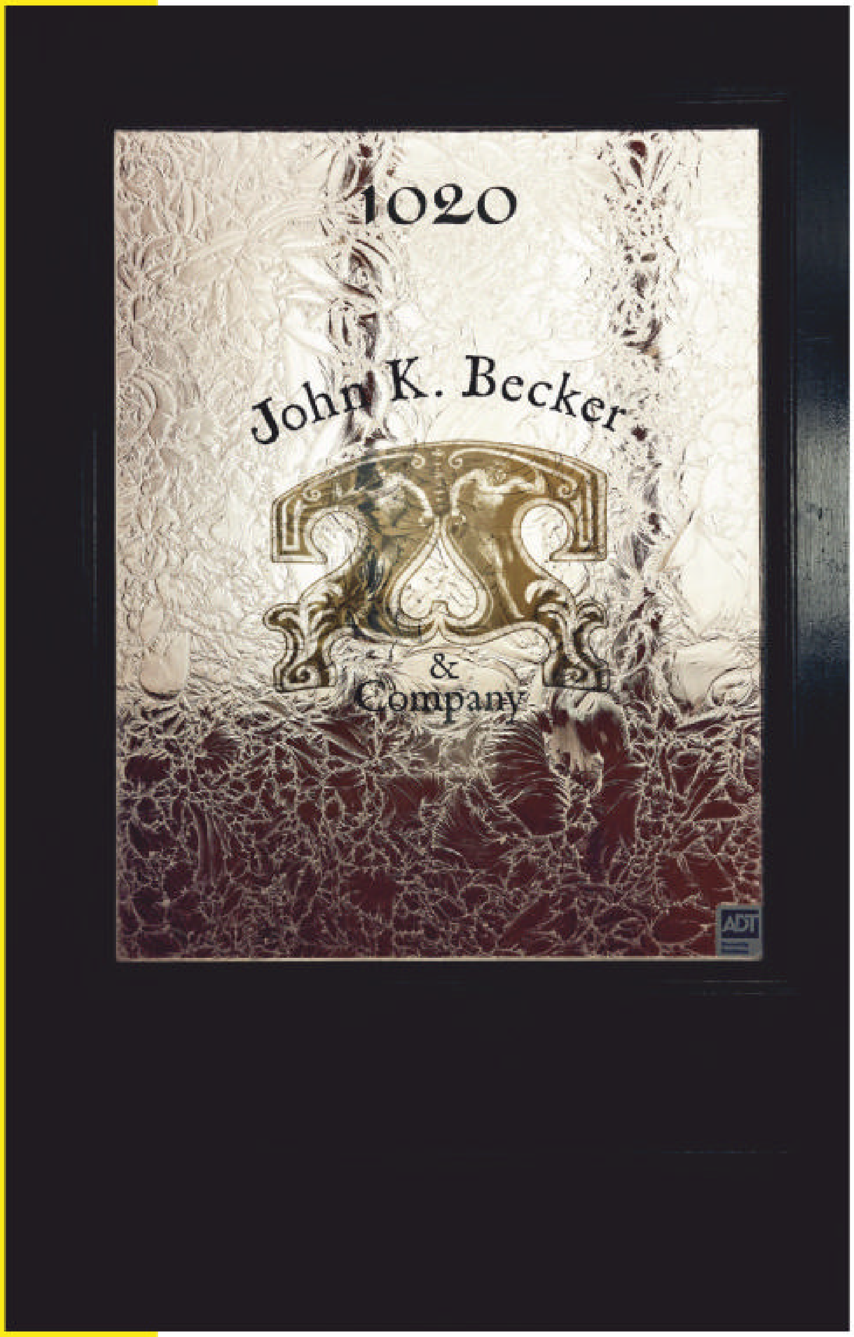


PHOTOGRAPHY: (CHEUNG FUN) QUNYING WU; (DOSA, NAM TOK, EEL) JEFF MARINI; (KHACHAPURI) POLLY NEVINS

BY ELLY FISHMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAVERIO TRUGLIA

The Violin Doctor

HE'S TRUSTED TO REPAIR SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST FABLED—AND EXPENSIVE—INSTRUMENTS. HOW DOES JOHN BECKER MANAGE TO UNLOCK THE SOUND OF A STRADIVARIUS?



IT'S A FEW MINUTES PAST 10 IN THE morning, and John Becker stands just inside the door to his company's office in the Fine Arts Building downtown. He wears a black workman's apron, which he fits to his body by wrapping the ties around his torso twice. With his shoulders slightly hunched, he quietly observes the almost surreal scene unfolding before him.

A few feet away, Joshua Bell and James Ehnes, two of the most prominent solo violinists on the planet, hover over an Arts and Crafts–style wood table. Normally, Bell, a former child prodigy known for his virtuosic, animated playing, and Ehnes, a musician's musician celebrated for his technical prowess, would be the superstars in the room. Both have won multiple Grammy Awards, and between the two of them, they have performed in nearly every major concert hall and with all the best orchestras in the world. But here, in Becker's studio inside his office, another icon takes center stage.

"I'm really nervous and excited," says Bell, his hands stuffed in his pockets. "It's like meeting my wife again after two months. I'm a little overwhelmed."

"Oh yeah, I understand the feeling," Ehnes chimes in, his tone nearly giddy. His eyes are set on an object perched on a gray cloth that covers the tabletop. "I've never seen this violin before. It's incredible. It's so beautiful." He pauses as though to take in every contour. The spruce wood – a swirl of orange and red hues – glows under the morning light. "It's stunning."

The violin in question belongs to Bell. The 310-year-old instrument, which Bell has said is worth as much as $15 million, is among the roughly 650 made by the renowned 18th-century Italian craftsman Antonio Stradivari that survive today. Bell left it with Becker for repairs, and over the past two months, the master luthier applied protective polish to preserve the original varnish, removed the top to make internal repairs, and handcrafted several cleats to reinforce tiny cracks in the wood. Bell has flown in from New York to retrieve the violin, which has been his concert instrument since 2001, before he departs on a tour of South America and Italy.

Ehnes plans to leave his own Strad with Becker for more minor repairs – a bridge adjustment, a varnish touchup, a new sound post – which will take only a day. The Canadian has made this essential stop before heading to concerts in South Korea and Japan.

Becker turns to Bell and asks if he wants to give the violin a try. It may look beautiful thanks to the fresh polish, but after 213 hours of painstaking work, the true test is how it feels and sounds.

"Yes, I do," Bell responds, eagerly picking up the instrument.

Becker doesn't play violin, but his ears are more attuned to the famed sound of

Stradivarius instruments than perhaps anyone else's in the world. He steps back as Bell raises his bow.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO EXAGGERATE THE mythic reputation of Stradivarius violins. Antonio Stradivari is considered one of the two greatest violin makers in history. (Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, his contemporary, is the other.) The surviving Strads, celebrated for their lyrical, robust sounds and delicate shape, are prized by collectors, musicians, and historians. Each boasts its own name – like the Messiah, the Ruby, Bell's Gibson, or Ehnes's Marsick – and all come with a long ledger of previous owners. One, the Molitor, is rumored to have been owned by Napoleon. Coveted in their time, Strads have only gained in esteem and value.

There are other luthiers with expertise in instruments from the Italian craftsman's golden period, from 1700 to 1725, but master violin restorers are rare – around 20 worldwide now – and Becker is widely regarded as the best. At 64, he has worked on more than 120 Stradivarius violins – likely more, he says, than any other living person. David Fulton, a Seattle-based former software engineer and entrepreneur who once possessed the world's largest collection of historic Cremonese instruments (named for the city where Stradivari and other renowned Italian luthiers worked) with 28, including eight Strads, entrusted Becker to care for them. (Fulton has since started selling off the bulk of them.) "He's probably as fine a woodworker as lives on the planet today," says Fulton. "Without men like him, these things would have decayed into splinters long ago."

People travel from all over the globe to hand-deliver their instruments to Becker's office, across the street from Grant Park. (When it comes to multimillion-dollar instruments, FedEx doesn't cut it.) Once, says Becker, Nigel Kennedy, one of the most famous solo violinists of the 1980s, flew in from England for a day just so Becker could make him a new sound post, the small dowel that

> "Asked to explain his precise methods, Becker points to instinct. "These instruments have a certain soul," he says. "People think it's magic, but it's just experience."

The master luthier's kit includes 19th-century tools acquired at antiques markets and ones custom-made for him.

sits inside the violin and transfers vibrations from front to back. "He's like a great surgeon," says Bell. "His work is so meticulous. It's like constructing a sailboat inside a bottle. There's a reason I fly here to bring him my fiddle. He's the master."

When musicians visiting John K. Becker & Company arrive at the Fine Arts Building, at 410 South Michigan Avenue, they take a rickety elevator manned by one of the city's last remaining operators to the 10th floor. The building, which features ornamented columns and arches and a Venetian-style courtyard, has been a hub for all kinds of artists since the early 20th century. One of the company's workspaces sits in Frank Lloyd Wright's former studio. Another was once rented by *Wizard of Oz* illustrator William Wallace Denslow. Becker & Company's main entrance is at the end of the hall. The office's vaulted ceilings are a relic of the building's original purpose as showroom for carriages. On the door is an illustration by Becker's wife, Anne, of a bridge modeled after that of the Medici tenor viola, likely the lone surviving one crafted by Stradivari.

Inside Becker's studio, the sun streams through two skylights, bathing the space in a warm glow. It's quiet. No music. No chatter. Just meditative scrapes and strokes of tools at work. Though the space is only about the size of a large bedroom, the high ceilings give it an airy feel. The temperature is kept at a cool 68 degrees all year, and humidity is tightly maintained between 50 and 60 percent. The room is divided into three workstations, occupied by Becker and the two Japanese luthiers he has employed since opening the shop 28 years ago. Becker's faded bench, tucked into a corner, is scarred with scratches and a smattering of stains, remnants of projects past.

Most days Becker wears the same thing: slacks, a button-down shirt under his apron, and Finn Comfort shoes, a German brand that he prefers to any American counterpart. He keeps his nails short and his mustache long. Becker is soft-spoken and economical in conversation – he'll never offer three words when one will do. He considers his words, often starting a thought with a lingering "OK." He isn't one for grand, theatrical statements. "Pretty cool" serves as high praise.

Becker's daily rhythms verge on monastic. He arrives before 8 a.m. after a 90-minute Metra ride from his home in the northwest suburbs. He spends most of the day in his chair, hovering over a violin, and takes only two breaks: at noon for lunch and at 3 for a snack. At 4:45, he packs up and leaves to catch a 5:20 p.m. train home.

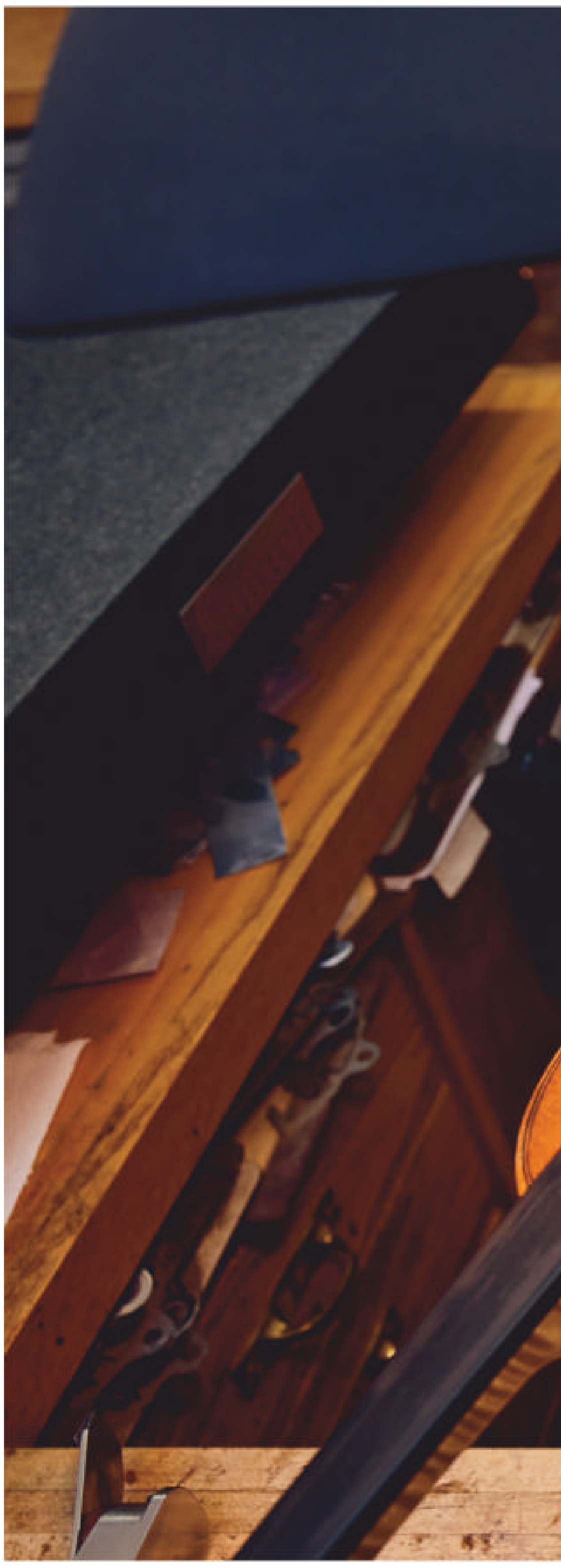
On this early August day, a week before the visit from Bell and Ehnes, Becker sits between his two luthiers, Takeshi Nogawa and Keisuke Hori. With his sleeves rolled up his forearm, Hori holds a thin cut of wood under a medical-grade microscope. It is, in fact, the top of an 18th-century violin made by the father of Guarneri del Gesù. (Three generations of the Guarneri family made violins.) The remaining pieces – the back, the ribs, the neck – rest a few inches away.

The instrument was brought in a few weeks earlier. The owner told Becker that it had been sitting in a garage for more than a decade after the owner's father retired from professional music. The years of neglect warped the instrument and left it in desperate need of restoration.

Hori examines the disassembled violin closely. As he does, he holds a small brush in his left hand. When he spots a crack in the wood, he dusts it with water to dissolve any specks of glue that remain from previous repairs. Hori counts four large cracks around the bridge and sound post and a few smaller ones scattered across the top. Beneath each, along the violin's underbelly, sits a tiny patch of wood, further evidence of previous repair. The patches are noticeably lighter than the original spruce, and their grain patterns are not nearly as fine. Hori intends to carefully remove and replace each. He has not yet selected the new material, but it will come from a large stock of tone wood that fills a loft space above the workshop floor. Becker has collected wood for decades, and most of his blocks are at least 40 years old. The longer the wood ages, says Becker, the better it gets.

After replacing each patch, one at a time over the course of several months,

Becker has mastered the delicate task of placing a new sound post inside a violin, leading one virtuoso to dub him the Postmaster.



Hori will turn to the edges of the violin. He must replace the old top doubling, a rope-like half-inch-wide piece that marks the outer rim, delicately carving and placing it. Then he'll address the back of the instrument. It, too, is sprinkled with cracks. The sides are in even worse shape. The curls of the thinly shaved maple are riddled with holes. The sight of them makes Hori both laugh and sigh. "A lot of damage," he says.

"This is a very, very big job," says Becker, looking up from his station. "It's going to be about 1,000 hours of work."

At $125 an hour, the company's rate, that bill will total $125,000. Though the repair alone costs as much as some high-end violins, Becker estimates that once

> "He's like a great surgeon," says renowned violinist Joshua Bell. "His work is so meticulous. It's like constructing a sailboat inside a bottle. There's a reason I fly here to bring him my fiddle."

Hori's work is finished, this Guarnerius could be worth as much as $800,000.

Becker used to handle the business side, but that job now belongs to his elder son, John Jr. Though John Jr. never studied woodworking, he grew up playing violin (he usually tests repaired instruments before his father returns them) and observing his father's craft. "For my dad, I think there's this idea of, if he's not going to do this work, who is?" says the son. "There has to be someone protecting these special works of art, and they have to do it right. He really cares about preserving the instruments in the right way."

For Becker, the work is an act of historic and cultural preservation. He often points to something Fulton once told him: "We are caretakers of these instruments. We move on, but these instruments continue to the next generation."

DESPITE BEING PERHAPS THE BEST OF these caretakers, Becker has never actually played a Stradivarius. Growing up in Huntington Beach, California, he was more interested in materials than music. He liked to tinker with wood. He would carve sculptures and even made a skateboard in junior high. In high school, he began to explore woodworking more seriously. His first big project, a grandfather clock, won third place at the Orange County Fair.

His junior year, a friend was making a guitar, and Becker decided to give it a try. "It looked really fascinating to me," he says. "The bending of the sides and how delicate and thin it was – it looked very challenging. And it looked like something I would really like to do."

But Becker didn't want to make just any guitar – he wanted to customize one for a musician he admired. So a year later, after his family moved to Chicago, Becker sought out Randy Wolfe (better known as Randy California), the original lead singer and guitarist of his favorite band, Spirit, following a concert. "I asked him what he liked," Becker recalls, "and he said he liked a Fender scale, which is a longer neck than a Gibson, and the whammy bar."

Becker got to work. When he eventually finished the guitar, five years later, he put it in a case and presented it to Wolfe before a Spirit concert at Beginnings, a now-shuttered venue in Arlington Heights. "His eyes – he was just mesmerized," Becker recalls.

Later that night, when the audience called Wolfe back out for an encore, he returned with Becker's guitar in hand and christened it with a rendition of "Wild Thing." "It was crazy," Becker says. "Making that guitar had a big impact on me. I didn't grow up in a musical family, but I realized I wanted to help musicians. I get that same excitement working with classical violinists."

After graduating from high school, Becker joined the apprentice program at Lyon & Healy, the internationally renowned harp manufacturer in the West Loop. There he learned how to make the instrument part by part – first the process of crafting the base and gluing the columns, then the technique of carving and shaping the curves that define a harp's structure. When Lyon & Healy commissioned a special harp for the company's 100th anniversary just a few months into his apprenticeship, the company asked Becker to build it. "It had this intricate geometric shape," he recalls. "The carvings wrapped around a cylinder, and it all had to match up. It was tough, but it turned out really well, and it remained in their showroom for years."

After a little more than a year at Lyon & Healy, Becker wanted to try his hand at something else. He was drawn to the idea of working on rare violins – "I could see it was a craft" – and applied for a position at the prestigious violin dealer and restoration shop Bein & Fushi in 1979. Also located in the Fine Arts Building, Bein & Fushi ran a cutthroat apprentice program, but Becker's talent was obvious from the start. "They said I was the best person they'd ever had," he says.

When the top restorer left in 1982, Becker was tapped to fill his shoes. His first repair? The Adam, a 1714 Stradivarius violin named for a former collector. The business's co-owner Robert Bein had given his employee *The Secrets of Stradivari,* a book by the acclaimed Italian luthier Simone Sacconi outlining the author's best practices, and Becker absorbed them all. "I did some great work on that instrument," he says.

Becker's son Garrett (left) makes Stradivarius-inspired violins of his own, while his brother, John Jr. (center), manages their father's business.

In 1989, Becker took over as head of the entire workshop. Already renowned, Bein & Fushi became one of the world's most prominent violin shops during Becker's time there, thanks in large part to his work. "He was brilliant," recalls Drew Lecher, who worked alongside him. "I guess you could say he had a Midas finger. If a violin didn't sound right, he'd make it sound right. And if it didn't look quite right, he'd make it look right. He was the standard-bearer."

In 1994, after 15 years with Bein & Fushi, Becker left to open his own shop just a few doors down the hall. And it's there, under the glow of those skylights, that Becker has quietly assembled his reputation as a preeminent luthier.

BECKER & COMPANY COMMISSIONS ARE generally split into two kinds of projects: repairs and restorations. Repairs involve smaller improvements, such as carving a new bridge to improve the instrument's tone. Or fashioning a new fingerboard – the long piece of ebony wood that runs along the neck. Or touching up the varnish. These types of repairs take anywhere from a day to several weeks.

Restoration, by contrast, can take several months or even years. While some restorations involve only a specific area in need, others require taking the entire instrument apart and redoing every previous repair. Becker has completed several such jobs for David Fulton, the collector. The first one was the Baron Knoop, a 1715 Stradivarius. Becker carefully removed the old retouching and French polish to reveal the original Stradivari varnish, which had been hidden. The violin also had several deteriorating patches of wood, which Becker replaced. He made a new sound post, bridge, and base bar, built a new fingerboard, adjusted the pegs, and reset the neck. In all, the job took three months. "John restored the violin to what it ought to be," Fulton says.

Becker planes the fingerboard of a 1694 Stradivarius.

One early September morning, Becker sits at his desk holding a 1694 Stradivarius in one hand and a small metal straightedge gauge in the other. With his glasses perched on his nose, he brings the instrument under a bright lamp and places the tool in three different spots along the violin's fingerboard. How the fingerboard sits beneath the gauge indicates where it has changed shape under the weight of the owner's fingers. This board, Becker says, has been significantly worn down, as evidenced by several small ridges that give it almost a wave-like texture.

It takes Becker only a few seconds to make the assessment, and then he gets to work, sliding a trimming plane back and forth across the fingerboard in a motion that mirrors an iron gliding across a wrinkled shirt. Small ebony shavings begin to gather around the instrument. Becker occasionally pauses to remeasure the board. He'll continue trimming until he's satisfied with the shape, which must be just right to ensure the strings don't buzz.

Becker also plans to replace the violin's sound post, which he had noticed was slightly loose. Carved from aged spruce, it's an unassuming yet critical piece. When its tension isn't precisely right, the instrument will not resonate properly. A well-fitted sound post is essential to revealing the full richness of the violin's timbre.

The new sound post will be a tenth of a millimeter taller than the current one. The additional length will help the post sit more snugly and create the appropriate tension. Becker will begin with a piece of spruce and plane it into a cylinder. From there, he'll take off tiny shavings with a small knife until the piece reads 52.8 millimeters tall and 6.4 millimeters wide. He has made hundreds of sound posts over his career. That part isn't particularly difficult. The art rests in maneuvering the sound post through one of the violin's two f-holes and placing it in exactly the right spot. But Becker is pretty good at that, too. "You know what game I played all the time?" he asks rhetorically. "Operation. I was really good at Operation."

These days, many of Becker's surgical tools fill two cubbies above his desk. On one shelf sit bottles of glue made from horse parts. Becker, like most high-end luthiers, prefers hide glue because it is water soluble, which makes reworking previous repairs easier, and elastic, which allows it to expand and contract with the wood over time. Another shelf is lined with an array of devices Becker has collected. Some, like his 19th-century carving tools, he found in antiques markets. Others, like the fine art files, came from France. Still others were custom-made for his needs.

Among the tools is a thin, curved piece of metal that resembles something a dental hygienist might use to scrape plaque. This is what Becker uses to place the sound post. He'll do so in one swift, balletic movement, with only small adjustments thereafter. No hesitation. No backtracking. He seeks a moderate tension, neither tight nor loose, and his confident gesture reflects decades of practice. Becker's precision at this even garnered him a nickname from violinist Nigel Kennedy: the Postmaster.

The secret of the Stradivarius sound – powerful, lyrical, and assertive – has been a subject of obsession for musicians, scholars, and alchemists for centuries. One hypothesis posits that Stradivarius used Alpine spruce that grew during an uncommonly cold period, which made the wood unusually dense. Another theory focuses on the varnish, suggesting that the Italian craftsman used an unusual set of ingredients to achieve his signature honey color. A paper recently published in the German science journal *Angewandte Chemie* concludes that soaking wood in limewater, among other chemicals, created the unparalleled timbre. Scientists have used 3D lasers and CT scans to measure the precise geometry of a Stradivarius, but so far no one has been able to replicate its sound.

That doesn't stop contemporary violin makers from trying – Becker's younger son, Garrett, among them. He builds four instruments a year, each modeled from measurements he takes of the Strads brought to his father, and sells them for $27,000 apiece.

Becker's ability to pull the best sound out of Strads carries its own mystery, too. Asked to explain his precise methods, he points to instinct: "These instruments have a certain soul. When a soloist brings their instrument in, I don't need them to tell me what's going on. I watch them, I watch their bow, I watch their fingers. People think it's magic, but it's just experience."

JAMES EHNES HAS BEEN BRINGING HIS Stradivarius to Becker for more than 20 years. As a celebrated solo violinist, he's had the opportunity to play more than 100 Strads, many loaned to him by collectors for concerts or competitions. But when Ehnes first saw the Marsick in 1996, he knew it was special. Named for its 1916 owner, the Belgian violinist Martin Pierre Joseph Marsick, the instrument disappeared for nearly a century after landing in Russia just before the 1917 revolution. "The Marsick was the one I couldn't shake," says Ehnes. "The character spoke to me. I had this feeling that it was going to be really exceptional."

In 1999, David Fulton, a friend of Ehnes's, bought the violin for him to play. Ten years later, Ehnes purchased the instrument from him. Over those two decades, Ehnes has worked with Becker to bring the instrument back to life. "I knew what I wanted out of it," Ehnes says, "and John knew how to find it."

Ehnes brings the violin to Chicago for maintenance at least once a year. Over time, he and Becker have become close, building a friendship through mutual admiration and a shared reverence for Stradivari's craft. "John just really respects the instruments," says Ehnes. "He's not trying to put his mark on it. He's trying to let each individual instruments live up to its own potential."

Their long partnership is one reason Becker wanted Ehnes to inaugurate the first bowed instrument the luthier has built from scratch. Becker started working on the instrument, a bench copy of a Carlo Tenoni viola, while restoring the original at Bein & Fushi in the 1980s. But he never finished it, as family and professional duties got in the way. Then the pandemic hit. With a near-total stop in work, Becker suddenly had a lot of free time, so he decided to pick the project back up. He completed it just a few days before Ehnes arrived to drop off the Marsick.

Back in Becker's office that mid-August day, an hour before Joshua Bell is due to pick up his violin, Ehnes takes the deep cherry viola from Becker.

"I can't tell you how excited I am," says Ehnes, eyeing the instrument with delight. "This is a moment."

"It plays a little like a Ferrari," says Becker. "Give it a spin. See what you think. It was a long time in the process."

Ehnes begins to tune the four strings. Once satisfied, he pulls his bow across them and starts to play. After just a few seconds, he stops and looks at Becker, visibly astonished.

"The beauty of the core of that sound, you know how rare that is," he says. "You just don't find it. You nailed it. You absolutely nailed it."

Becker's mouth curls into a smile and he laughs sheepishly. "Sometimes it works out."

Ehnes turns back to the viola and starts playing again. He runs through excerpts from various Brahms violin sonatas, then Schumann's *Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tale Narrations)*. The low notes sound big and bold, while the delicate top ones dance and glitter. He then moves to Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Bach's Partita no. 1, filling the office with a palpable sense of melancholy.

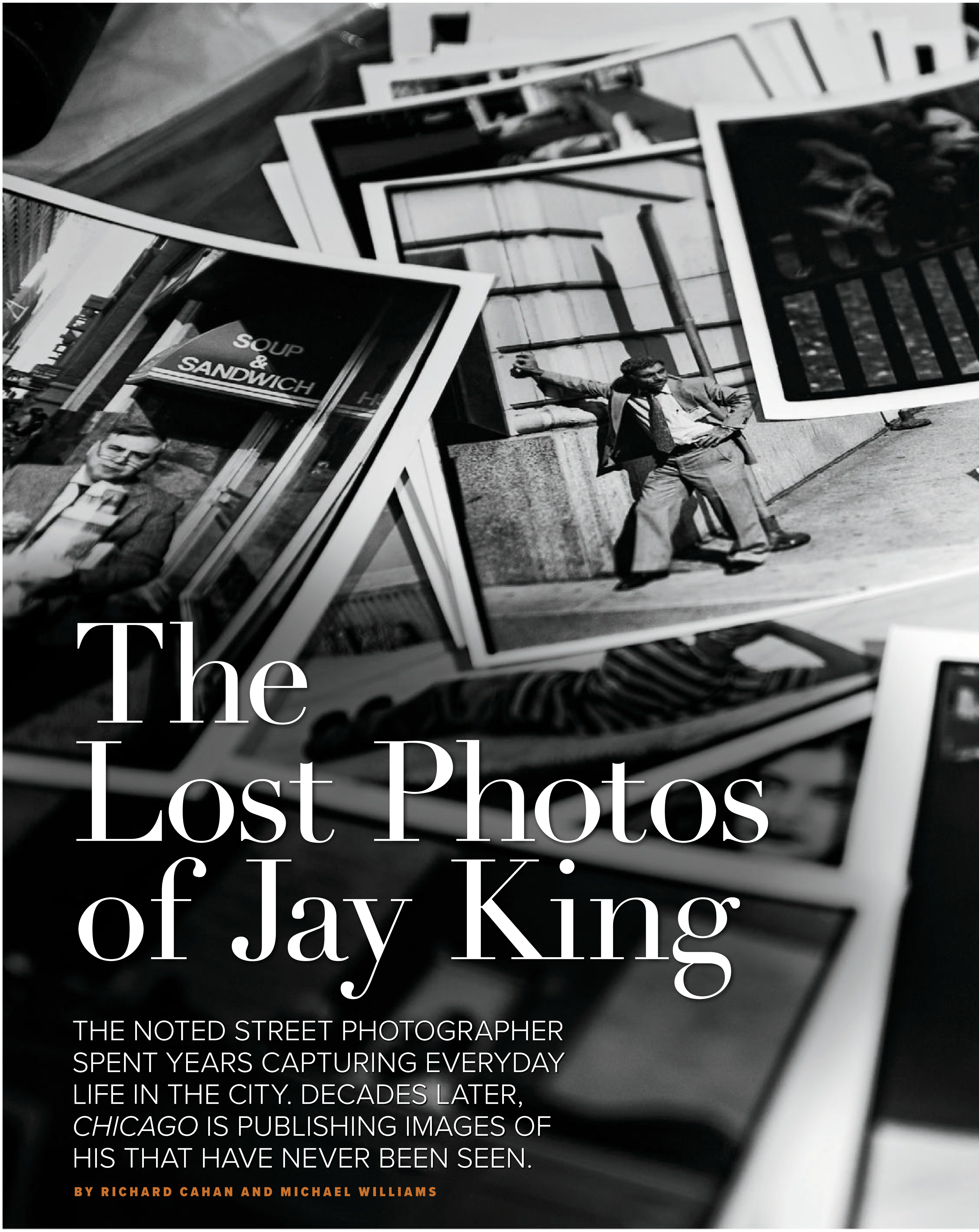
> Becker often points to something a collector once told him: "We are caretakers of these instruments. We move on, but these instruments continue to the next generation."

Ehnes pauses again. "It's sort of Strad-like in its concentrated sound. That amazing density. It just doesn't feel new at all."

"I know," Becker answers. "It's really weird."

If anyone were to create an instrument that replicates the ghosts of Cremona, it would be Becker, a man who has spent his career conjuring the sounds of 18th-century Italy.

When Ehnes returns the viola, he asks Becker what he intends to do with it. Becker shrugs. He's not sure if he'll sell it or keep it for himself. But wherever it goes, the viola will someday require repairs. And if it lands in hands as skillful as Becker's, maybe it too will eventually become an antique that carries the music of centuries past.



The Lost Photos of Jay King

THE NOTED STREET PHOTOGRAPHER SPENT YEARS CAPTURING EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE CITY. DECADES LATER, *CHICAGO* IS PUBLISHING IMAGES OF HIS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN.

BY RICHARD CAHAN AND MICHAEL WILLIAMS

During the pandemic, most people retreated to their homes. Jay King retreated into his past. Several times a week, he would walk down the basement steps of his Geneva home and sort through thousands of film negatives he had filed away years before.

King, 78, spent his working life as a commercial photographer. But his heart was on the street. Starting in 1962 and for the next four decades, he would roam Chicago with his small, quiet Leica Rangefinder camera.

His goal? He says he had none: "I just enjoyed it."

King's work, part journalistic and part artistic, was singular. In 1964, he showed prints to Hugh

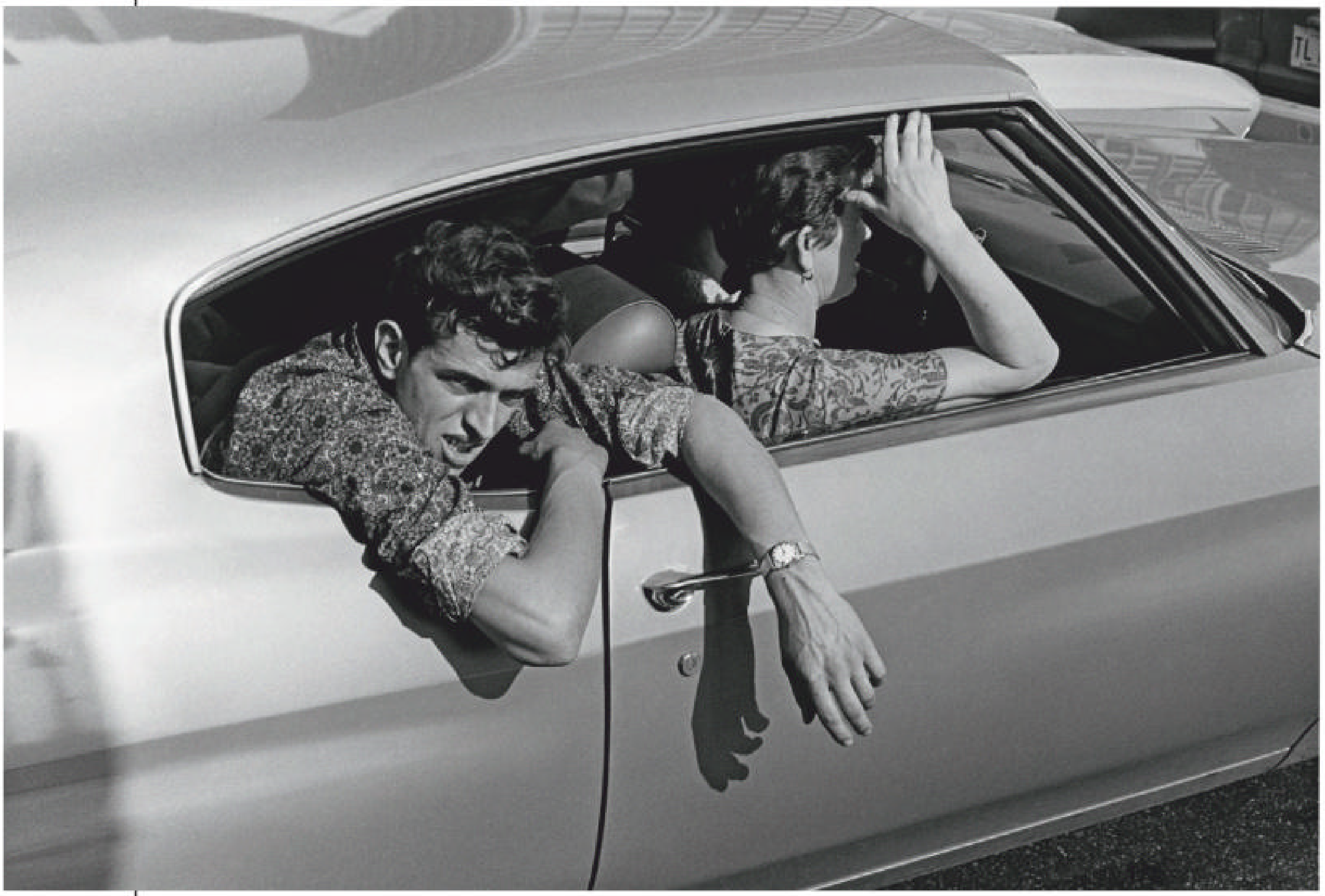
Edwards, the Art Institute of Chicago's influential curator of photography, who placed some of King's images in traveling exhibitions. Later, the Chicago photo dealer Stephen Daiter, who calls King one of the city's most significant street photographers, sold his prints, including several to New York's Museum of Modern Art. King was little known outside the world of galleries, but the attention he did receive didn't change his approach. "I was doing it for myself, not a gallery," he says.

King would process his own rolls of 35 mm film and, from the contact sheets he made of his daily shoots, pick a few images to print. Then he'd store the work away. Many of his photographs never saw the light of day.

Until now. When the pandemic hit, King returned to the negatives. "I was shocked by what I had passed over," he says. "Times change. Tastes change. What seemed insignificant then became important now."

On these pages you will see nine of his favorite finds – all printed the old-fashioned way in a darkroom, using an enlarger and photographic paper – and his stories behind them.

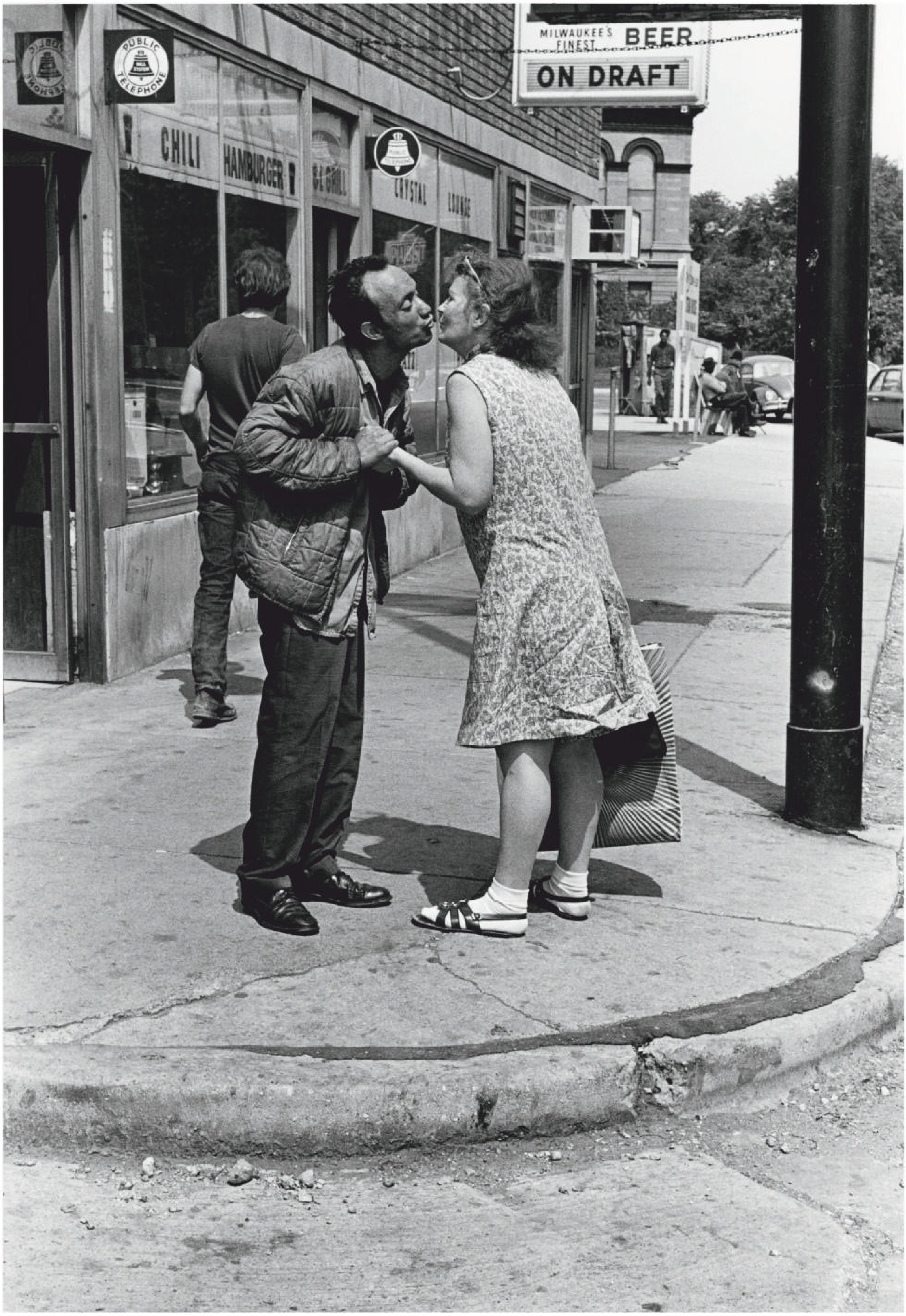
> "Street photography is a lonely business.
> You aren't controlling what happens. You are trying to catch what happens."



↑
1971 "This is before everybody drove around in air-conditioned cars. You could actually see inside cars in those days. This guy is leaning out to keep cool while the car — it looks like a 1960s Chevy — is stuck in traffic. Take a look at all the changes: the hairstyles, paisley shirt, even the watch. Not many people wear watches anymore."

→
1969 "This shows how completely a neighborhood changes. It's on Armitage Avenue, just west of Clark Street. The Lincoln Park West condominium replaced most of the buildings along this block. I lived nearby and shot a lot here. The couple doesn't seem to have a lot of money, but they do have a lot of love."

PHOTOGRAPHY: *PREVIOUS SPREAD* MUSTAFA HUSSAIN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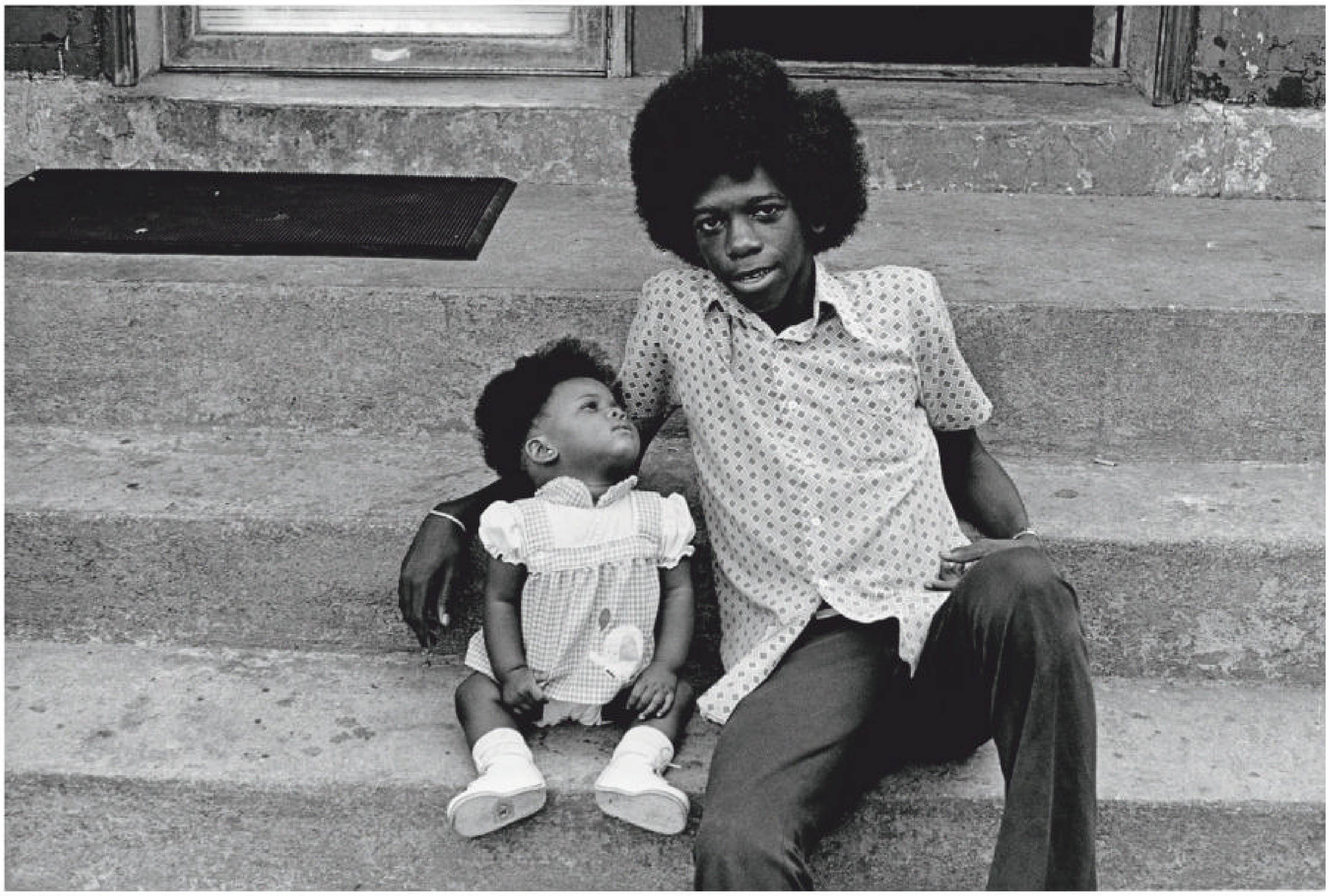
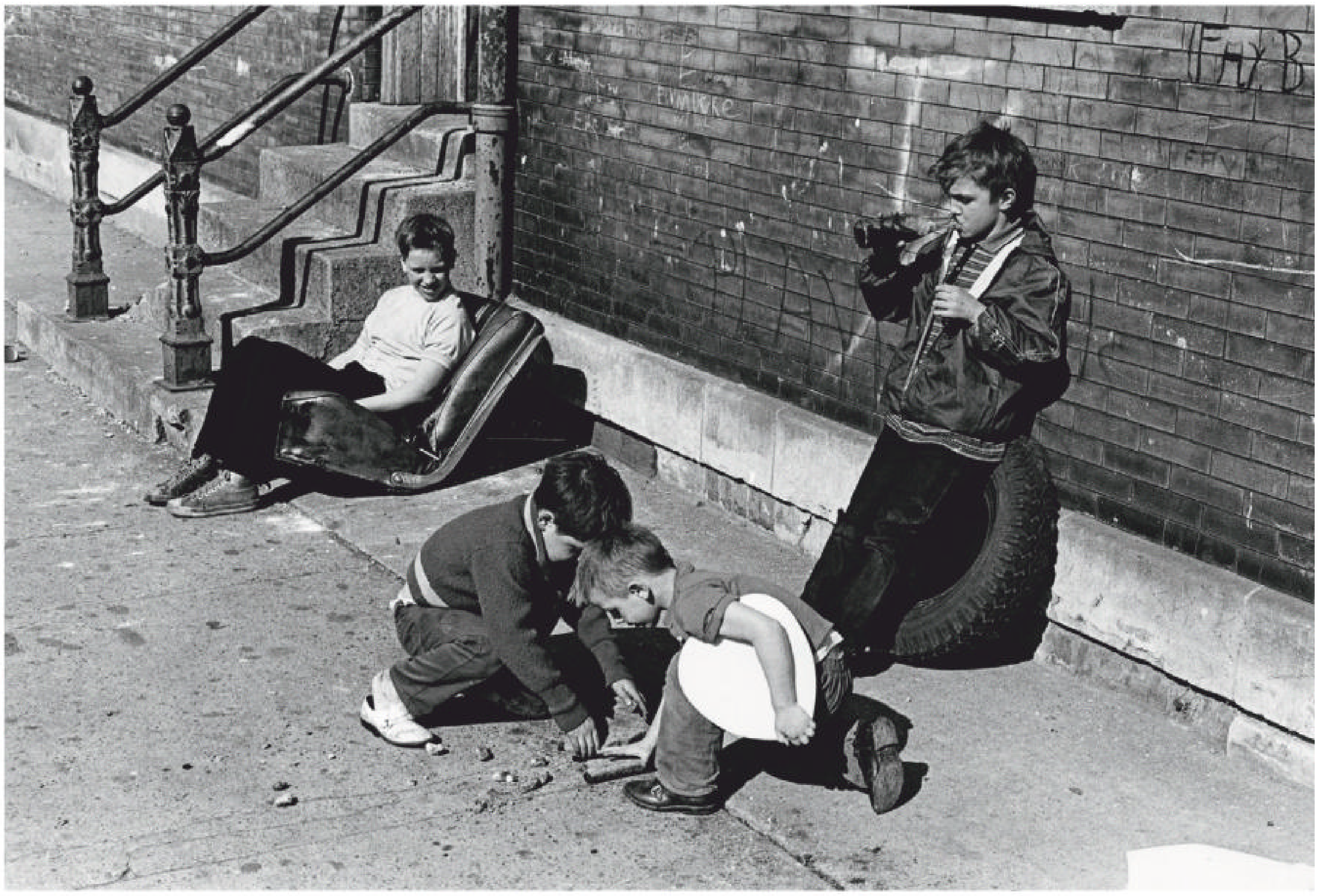
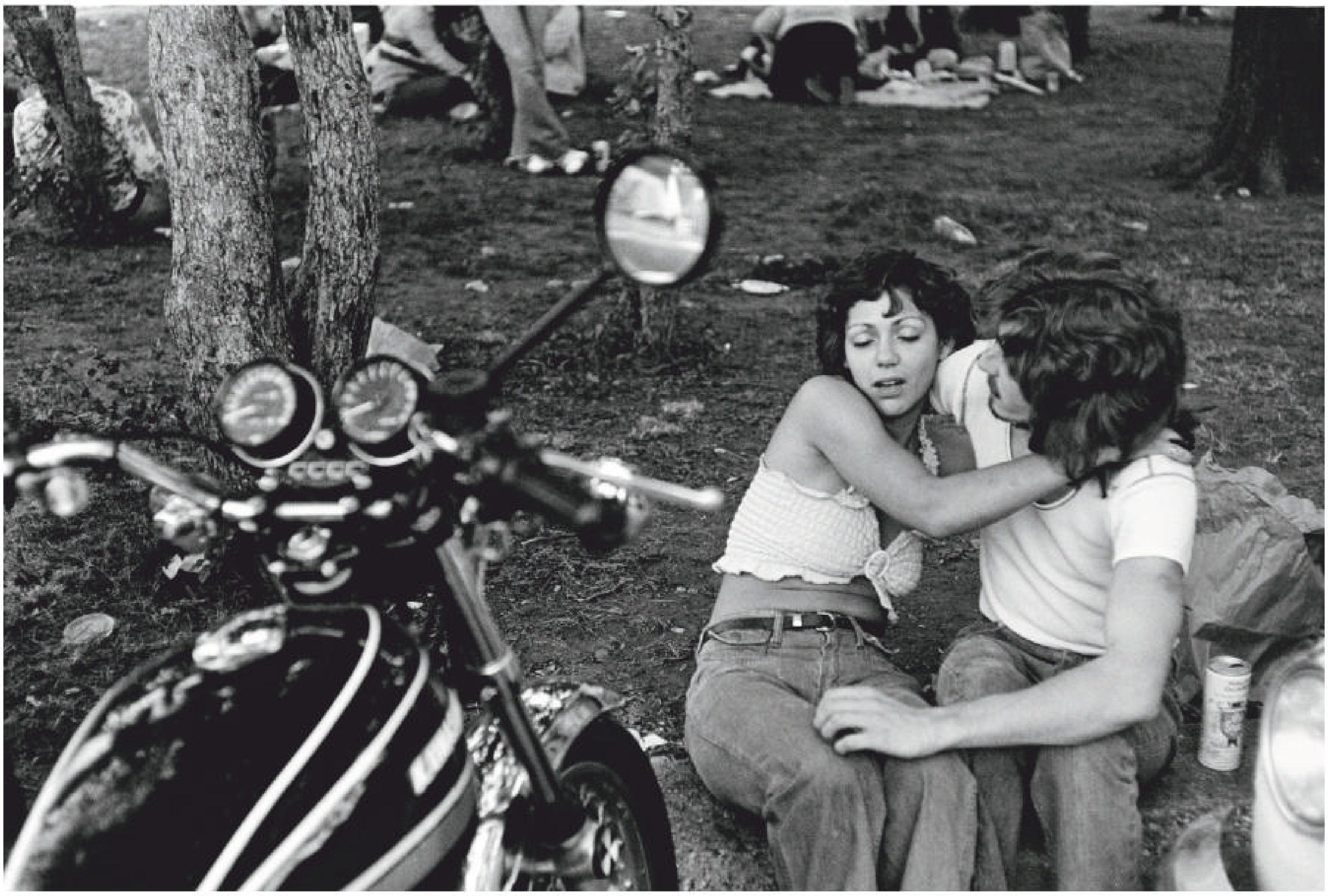
MILWAUKEE'S FINEST BEER
ON DRAFT
CHILI
HAMBURGER
CRYSTAL
LOUNGE



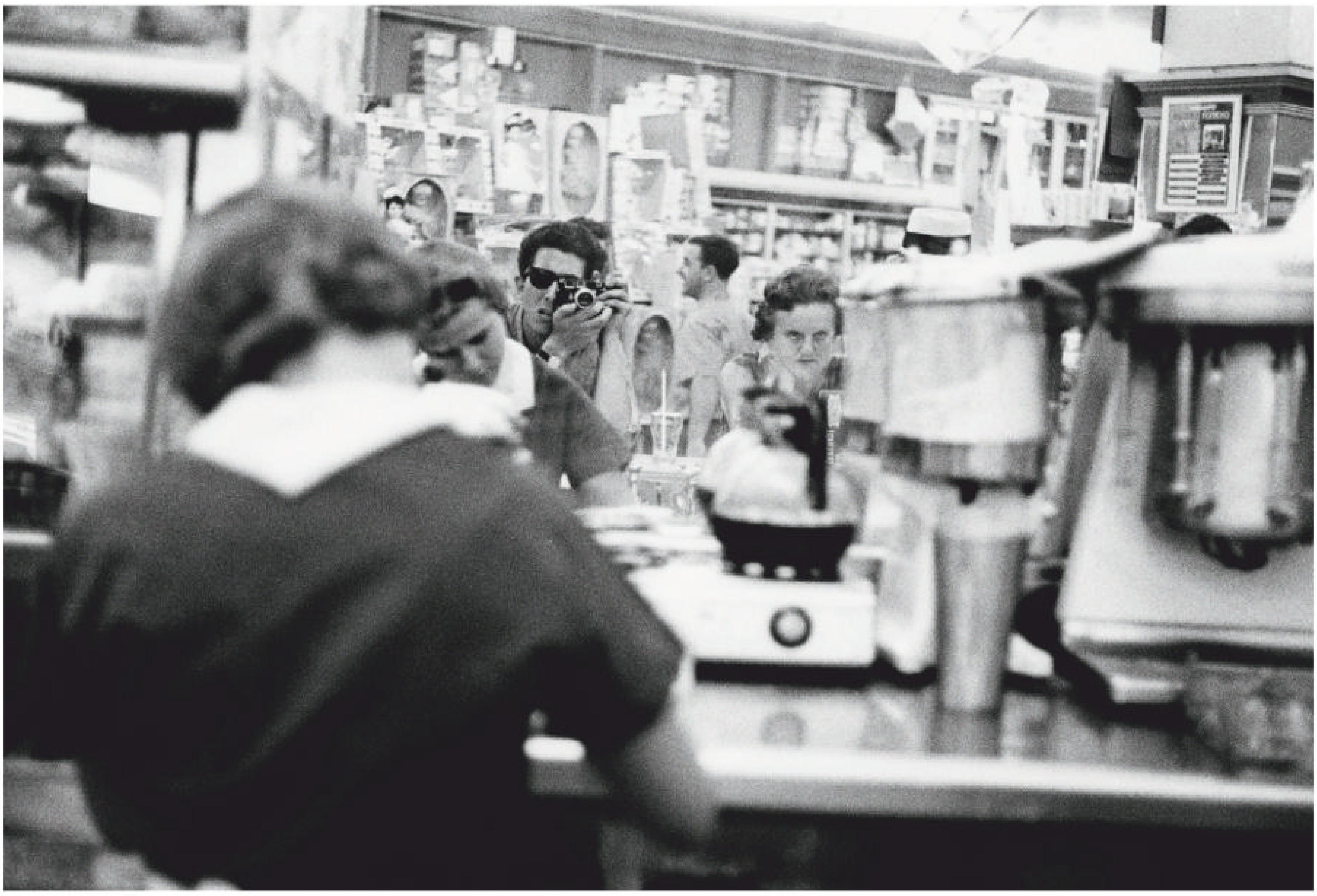
1974 “This was taken in the neighborhood of my photo studio on Chicago Avenue near Franklin Street. People were much friendlier to photographers in those days. They liked to be photographed. It gave them a sense of importance. I like the sweet and endearing quality of this photo.”



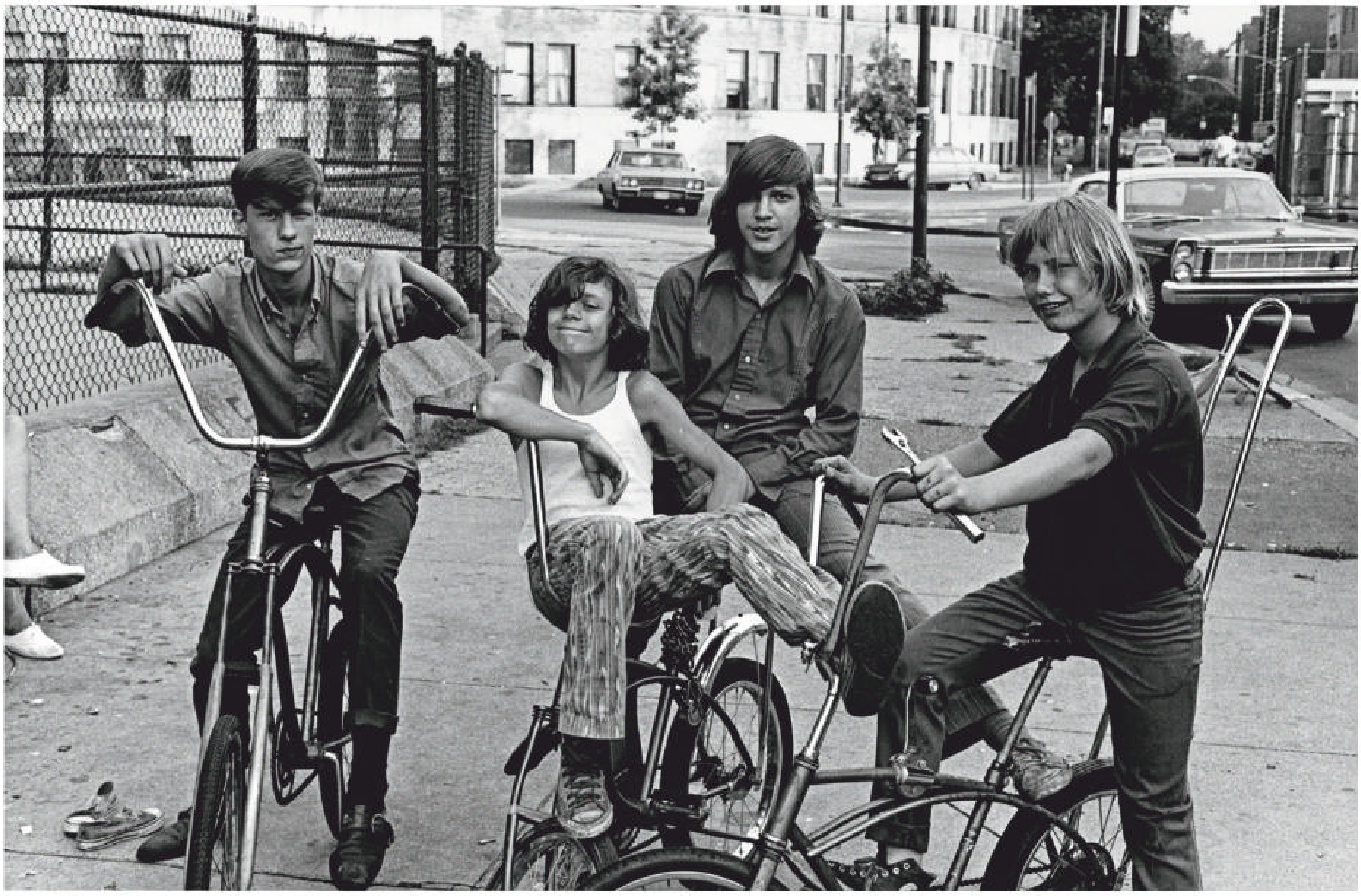
1971 “I love photographing kids on the street. This was taken on the North Side. There is a lot going on: a boy resting on a tire swigging on a bottle, two boys examining a crack on the sidewalk. But what makes the picture is the boy looking back at his friends. He’s sitting in an actual car seat. It almost looks like a movie set.”



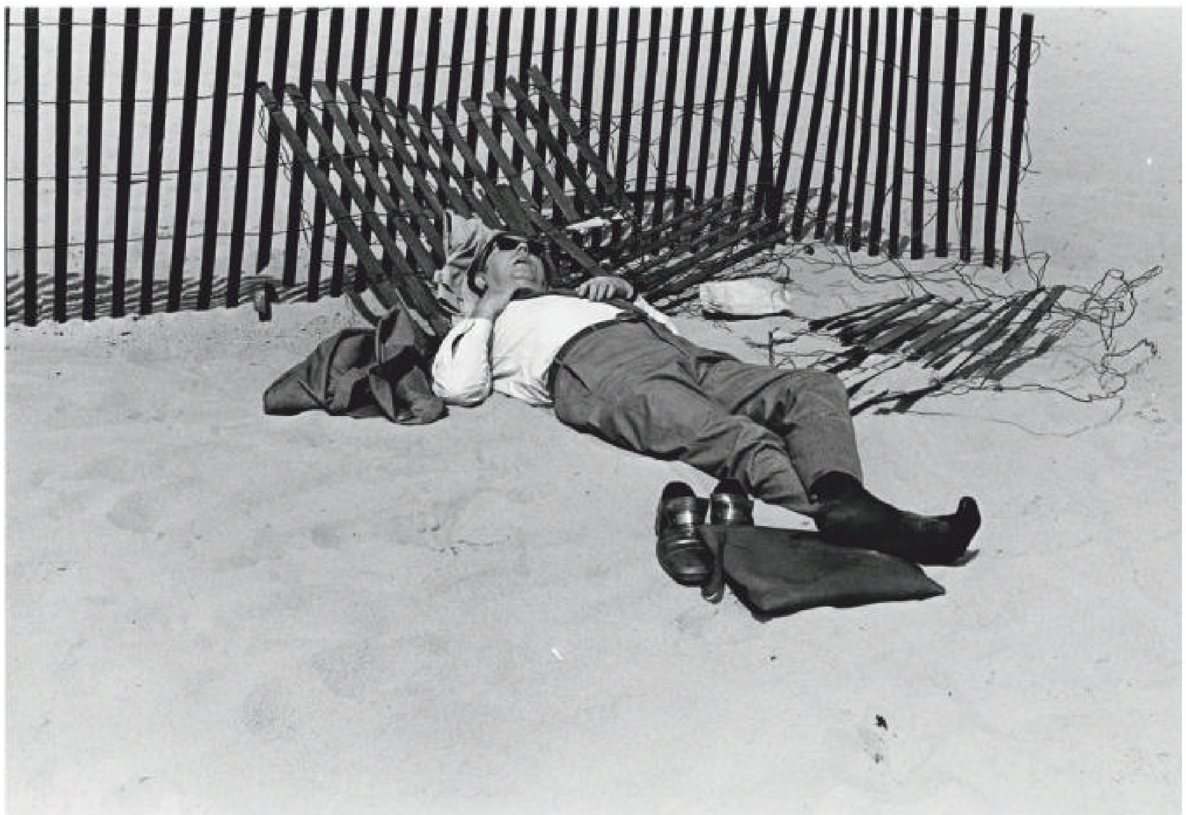
1976 “This is Lincoln Park. I didn’t print this at the time because it seemed like a missed shot. We photographers were looking for the decisive moment. Now I see this as an authentic moment. The motorcycle. The mirror. The beer can. A relationship that’s starting … or ending.”



1964 “The Woolworth’s diner on State Street was a place where you could get a meal for a buck. The lunch counter was ideal if you were alone. I was 20 when I took this picture. I’m surprised I was wearing sunglasses inside. I was using my first serious camera, a Leica, which I still have.”

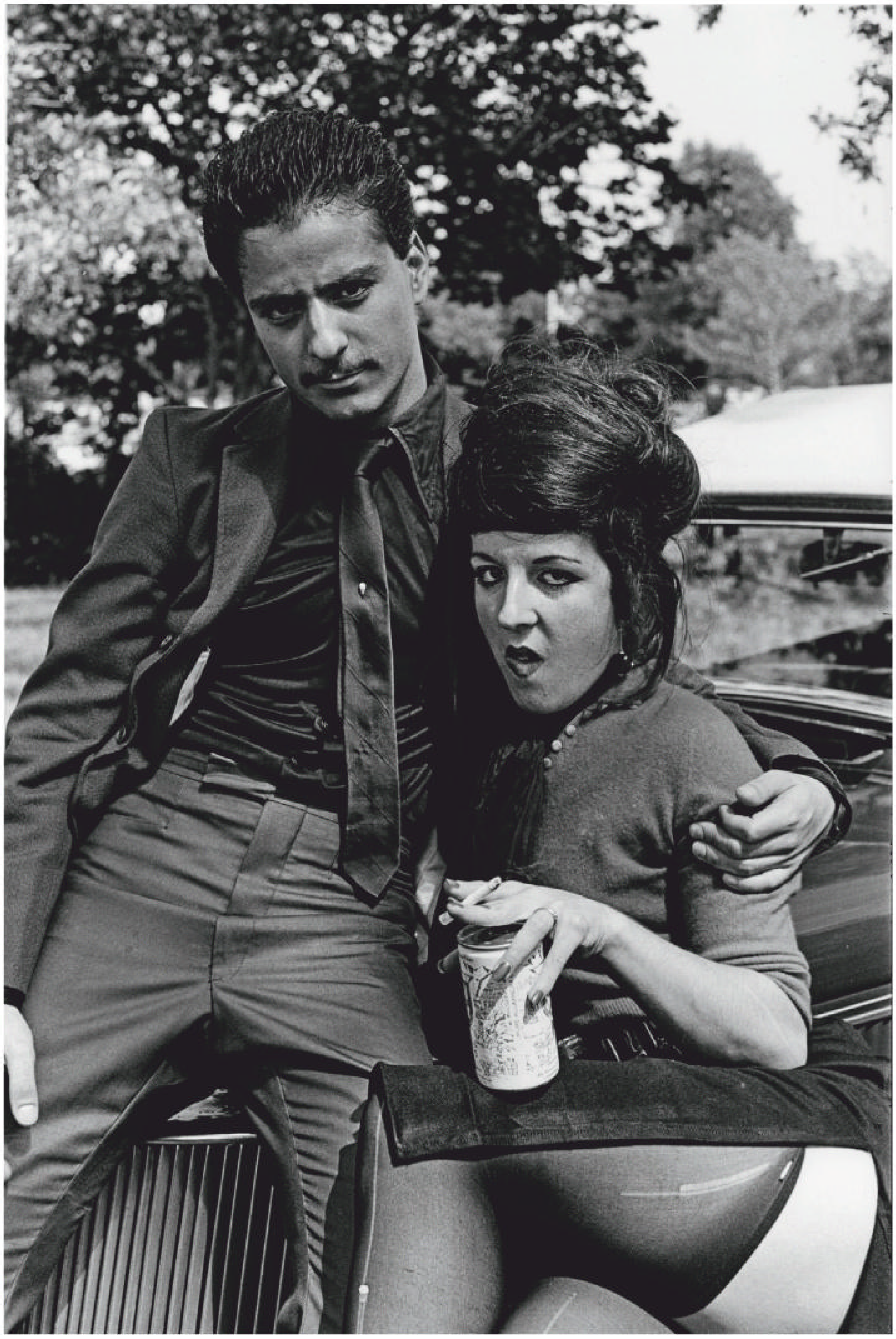


1971 “This is in Uptown near Buena Park. I hung out a lot in that neighborhood then. I would take pictures one day and return a few days later with small prints for my subjects. People knew me; they called me the Picture Man. They would approach me and ask me to take their picture. Those were exciting days. You didn’t know what was going to happen or who you were going to meet.”



1971 “What makes this picture so interesting now is the composition of the man and the snow fence. This is probably Oak Street Beach. I like the fact that this guy, so well dressed, used the fence to prop his head—something I would do myself. It happened so fast, I just grabbed it.”

“The darkroom seemed like a good place to go and not worry about getting sick. It’s a place that forces you to slow down.”



1977 “This was more of a collaboration than a grab shot. I think it was in a parking lot near Montrose Beach. It has so much of a Diane Arbus mood to it. But I might have passed on it years ago because it presented so many challenges to print. There’s harsh light and I had to work a long time in the darkroom to make this work. You look at these people and wonder where they are now.”

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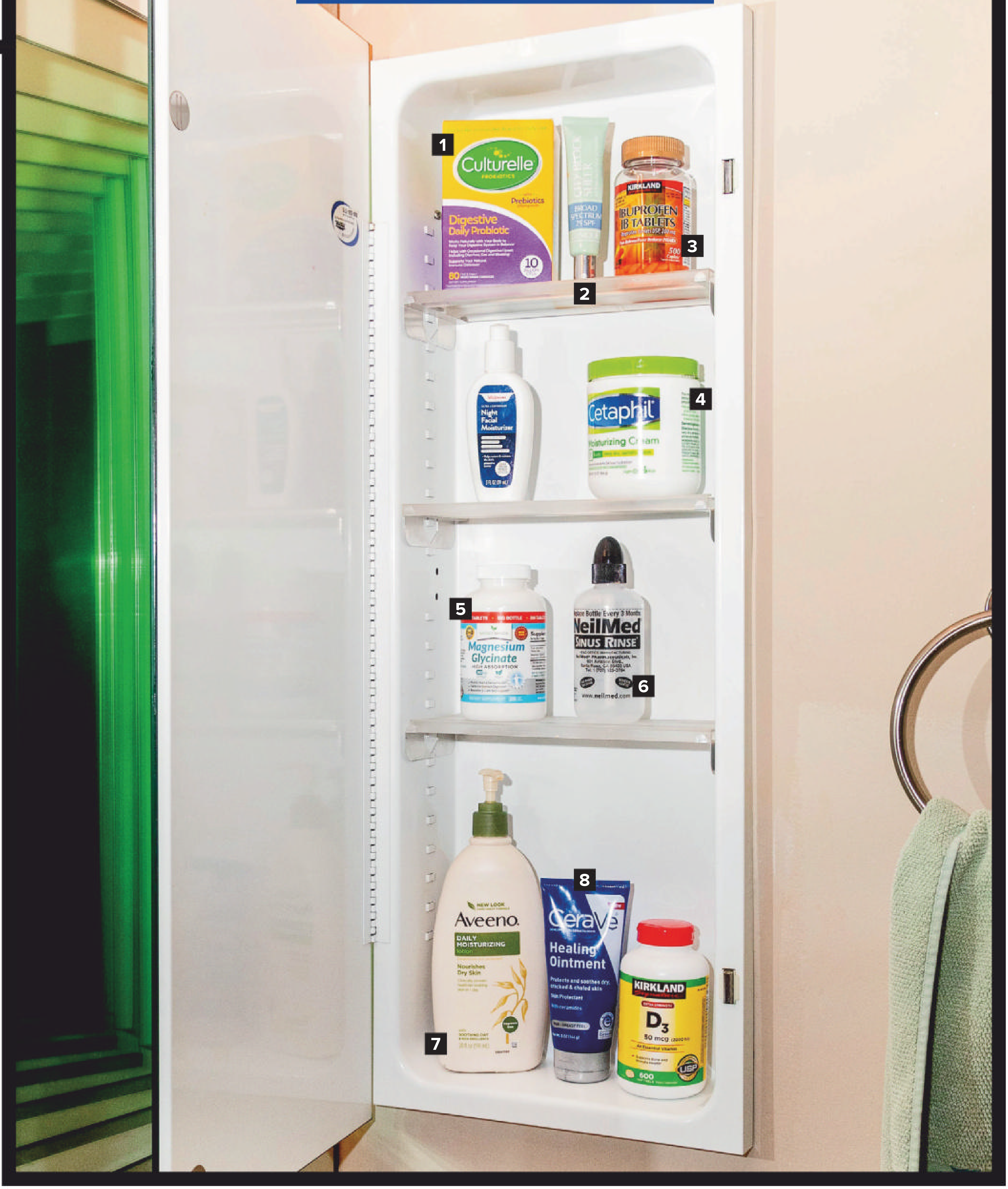
CARRIE M. GOSCH →

Children's Healthcare Associates in Lake View

The pediatrician, 56, is a regular swimmer and enjoys outdoor activities like tennis and hiking—which explains why she makes sure her medicine cabinet is well stocked with skin care products.

Note: Doctors' primary hospital affiliations are shown in parentheses.

PHOTOGRAPH: SCOTT DIRKS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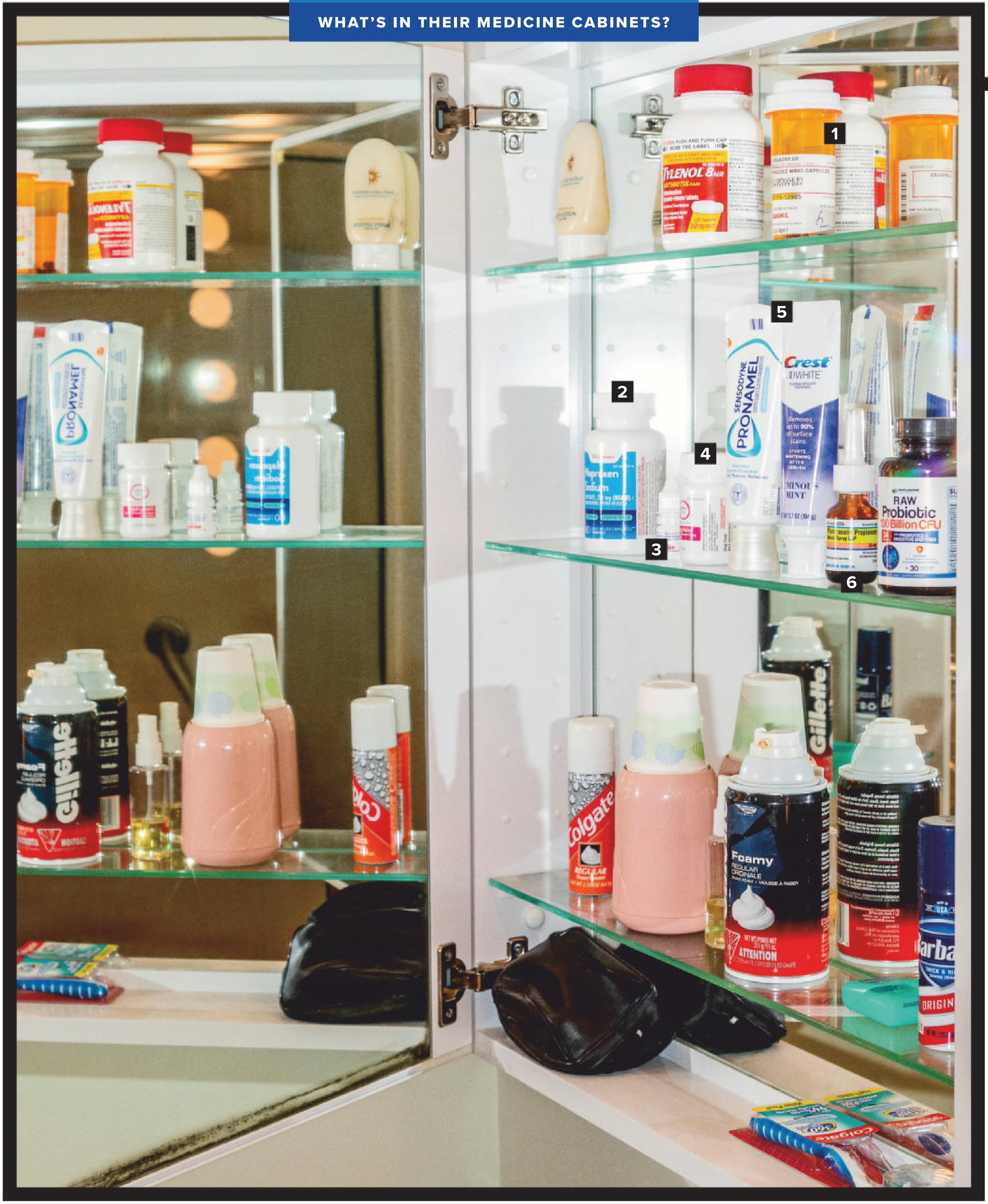
Culturelle
Digestive Daily Probiotic
2
3
Kirkland
Ibuprofen IB Tablets
4
Cetaphil
Moisturizing Cream
5
Magnesium Glycinate
6
NeilMed
Sinus Rinse
7
Aveeno
Daily Moisturizing Lotion
8
CeraVe
Healing Ointment
Kirkland
D3

1 **Culturelle Digestive Daily Probiotic** "Having a variety of different good bacteria in your gut just seems to be helpful with your overall health," Gosch says. 2 **Clinique City Block** "A very wise dermatologist told me, 'You should put this on your face every day.' I've done it for 30 years. This is how you don't get too wrinkly." 3 **Ibuprofen** "Everybody should have this in their medicine cabinet — for muscle soreness from working out or a headache after a rough day." 4 **Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream** As a doctor, Gosch washes her hands "multiple, multiple, multiple" times a day, so she uses this, especially before bed, to keep them from drying out. 5 **Magnesium glycinate** Gosch takes it to reduce headaches and help her sleep. 6 **NeilMed Sinus Rinse** "Allergists love this thing. You squirt it up one nostril, it comes out the other." 7 **Aveeno Daily Moisturizing Lotion** "It's just good. You can put it on a baby." 8 **CeraVe Healing Ointment** "If there are cracks in my hands, I use it for that."



1 **Omeprazole** "For gastroesophageal reflux, it works very quickly," says Salazar. "People say, 'I've been dying with this for the last day and a half.' And then it's gone in 30 minutes." 2 **Naproxen sodium** "I use this together with acetaminophen, which is Tylenol, on musculoskeletal pain." 3 **Olopatadine eye drops** "For the swelling, the conjunctivitis that goes along with allergy symptoms." 4 **Loratadine** "A lot of people, when they go out of town, end up getting nasal secretions or allergy symptoms because they're in a different locale." That's where this generic form of Claritin comes in handy. 5 **Sensodyne Pronamel and Crest 3D White toothpastes** "In the morning, I use the Sensodyne. It takes care of teeth that are sensitive to cold or heat. In the evening, if I've had tea or wine, I use the whitening Crest stuff." 6 **Fluticasone propionate nasal spray** Salazar finds this generic form of Flonase more effective than Afrin for allergies. "It'll take care of the heavier nasal symptoms."

← **LUIS I. SALAZAR**
Provida Family Medicine in Gurnee

Whenever he travels, the family physician, 61, tosses his go-to medications in a bag to bring along. "That has saved me a lot of time and trouble," Salazar says.

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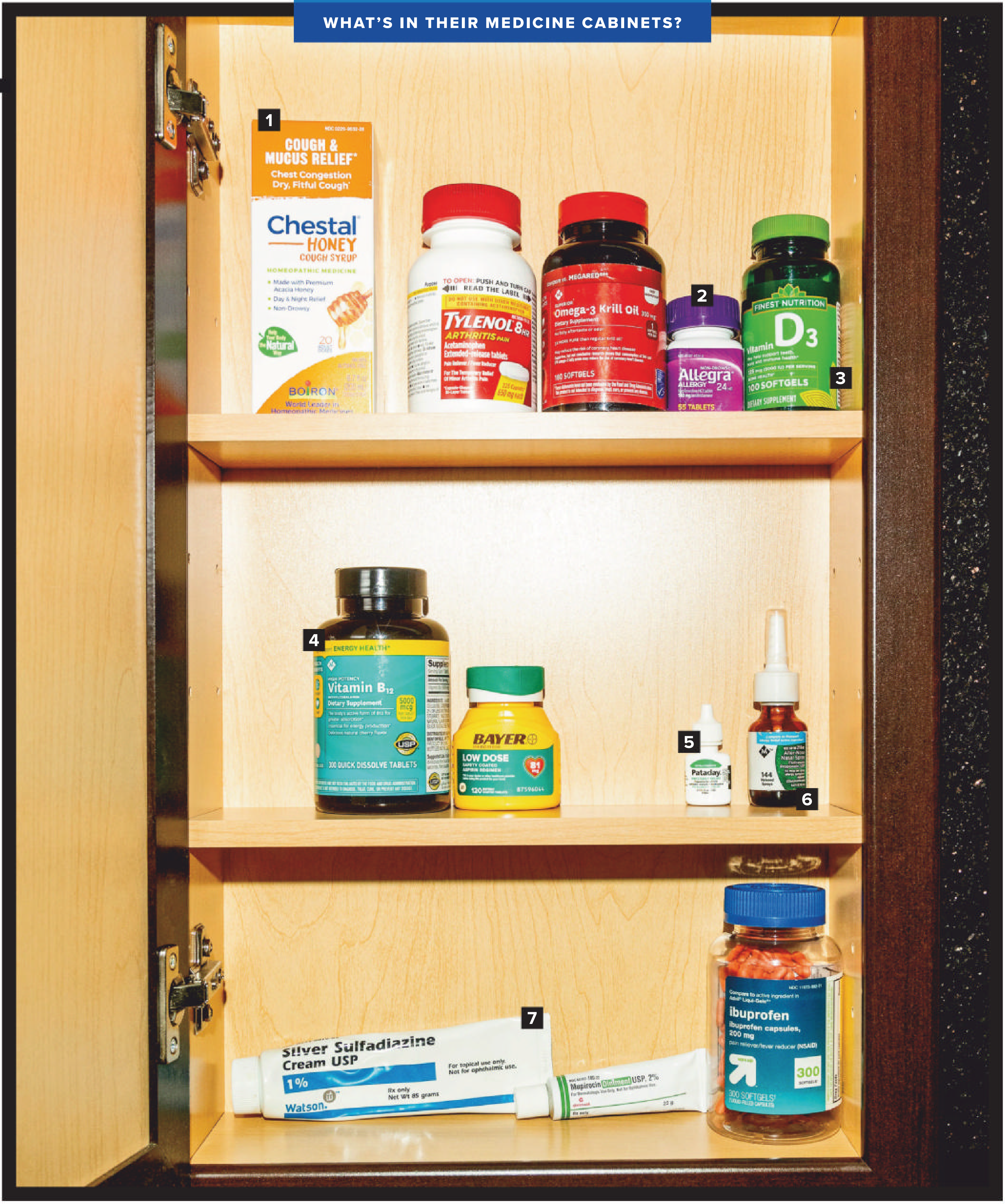
WAFAA G. → HANNA

Healthy Kids
in Tinley Park

The pediatrician says her 25-year-old daughter still turns to her for medical advice: "I'm the first person she calls." Often the issue can be handled with an over-the-counter med like the ones Hanna keeps on hand.

PHOTOGRAPH: ADVOCATE HEALTH CARE



1 **Chestal cough syrup** "It's a French product, but it's available on Amazon and in Whole Foods," says Hanna. "It's honey based, all herbal. No chemicals. It soothes the back of the throat to make the cough less frequent. Most of the cough medications are really bad: They suppress the cough, and cough is a protection." **2** **Allegra** For her hay fever. "It relieves the symptoms for about 18 to 24 hours." **3** **Vitamin D3** "Because we live in the Midwest, more than half of the year we don't have sun. And we don't drink enough milk. Vitamin D is important for immunity and also for cancer prevention and bone health." **4** **Vitamin B12** "It is important for the nervous system and for forming good red blood cells for prevention of anemia. If you don't eat enough meat, you don't have enough of B12 in your system." **5** **Pataday eye drops** For eye allergies, which are less common than nasal ones. "It relieves itching really fast, and the burning sensation." **6** **Aller-Nose nasal spray** This generic version of Flonase doesn't just treat the symptoms of seasonal allergies. "It also prevents the reaction in the nose to the pollens." **7** **Silver sulfadiazine cream** "It is amazing for burns. It reduces the pain. It prevents blistering."

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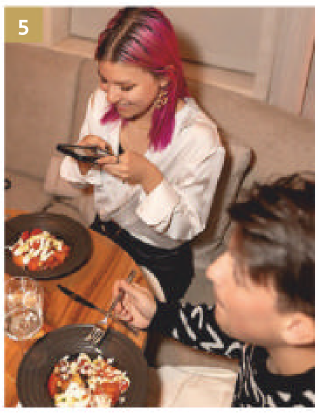
CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

SECRET SUPPER

On October 24, *Chicago* magazine hosted its fourth and final Secret Supper of 2022 at Parker Hospitality's newest West Loop restaurant,Nisos. Ticket holders enjoyed a five-course dinner curated by Athens-born executive chef Avgeria Stapaki in the restaurant's bright and airy second-floor dining room. The evening's Mediterranean-inspired menu highlighted seasonal, fresh ingredients and included dishes like tiropita with feta, Gruyère, mint, and honey as well as sea bass carpaccio with lemon gel, garlic blossoms, and beetroot tapioca chip. The experience ended on a sweet note with rizogalo, a twist on rice pudding, topped with mango sorbet, cinnamon crumble, and cinnamon tuile. Stapaki's menu was thoughtfully paired with refreshing and beautiful cocktails featuring El Tesoro Tequila, Haku Vodka, and Roku Gin. The Secret Supper was sponsored by Beam Suntory, Brizo, and Delta Chicago, and a portion of the proceeds benefited the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer in honor of October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



PHOTOGRAPHY: FOX & HARRISON

1. The sold-out Secret Supper was hosted at Parker Hospitality's new West Loop restaurant, Nisos. **2.** Cocktails were sponsored by Beam Suntory and featured (clockwise) El Tesoro Tequila, basil-infused Haku Vodka, and Roku Gin. **3.** A group of guests looking forward to the evening. **4.** Chef Avgeria Stapaki plating the octopus entrée course with fava and shallot chutney. **5.** The Mediterranean-inspired menu included a creative take on horiatiki salad with whipped feta, tomato, dehydrated cucumber, and koulouri. **6.** A group of guests from Brizo and Delta Chicago enjoying their evening. **7.** Rizogalo dessert with mango passion fruit sorbet, cinnamon crumble, and cinnamon tuile. **8.** Attendees tasting the featured cocktail, God of the Sun, with El Tesoro Tequila, chile, passion fruit, Sparkling Limonata, and Burlesque Bitters.

▸ To purchase tickets for future Secret Supper events please visit chicagomag.com/secret-supper.

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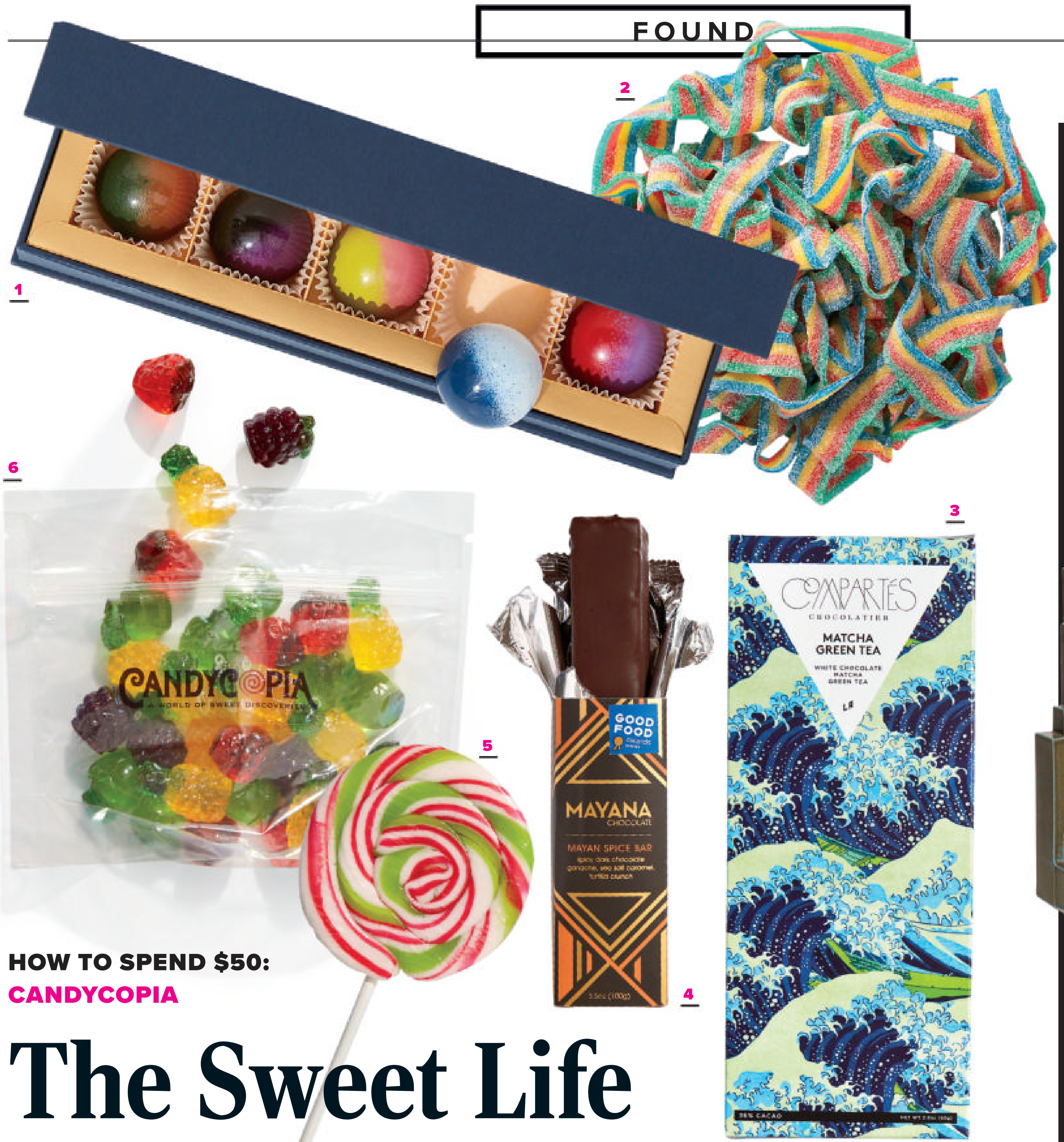
FOUND

Step Forward

Two brothers team up for a new line of playful shoes for bons vivants. By JESSICA MOAZAMI

Call it an exercise in sole-idarity. Noted Chicago-born shoe designer Brian Atwood has joined forces with his younger brother Zak Rodriguez to create limited-edition women's footwear. The brand's name, Il Fratellino (Il Frat for short), is Italian for "little brother"—a college nickname Brian's friends gave Zak. The duo wants wearers to have fun in these shoes. "Every pair is designed to have incredible energy and made for a big night out," says Zak, who still lives here. The shoes are dreamed up by the brothers, handcrafted in Porto, Portugal, and sold only online. The first collection, priced from $250 to $490, dropped last spring. When new styles arrive each season, you have to snag them fast before they're gone. Currently up for grabs: silk mules with custom-dyed ostrich feathers (pictured; $490), bold metallic booties and heeled sandals, and white Italian leather sneakers. *ilfratellino.com*

Photograph by LISA PREDKO



HOW TO SPEND $50:
CANDYCOPIA

The Sweet Life

Oak Park's appetizing new boutique proves there are many ways to get a sugar rush.

By WEB BEHRENS

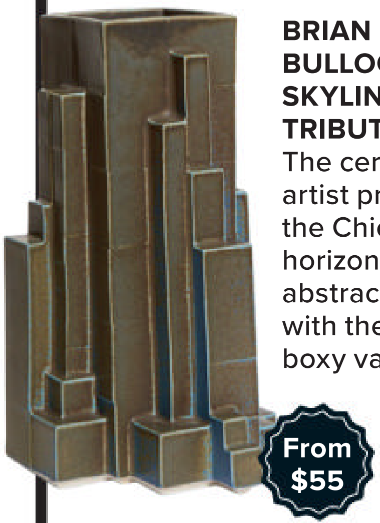
THE FUNNY THING IS I'M ACTUALLY MORE OF A SALTY-savory person," says Patrick Mason. These are ironic words when spoken inside Candycopia, a sanctum for sweets that he and his wife, Alycia, opened in June. A self-described "food nerd," Mason beams when asked what flavors he's discovered since becoming his shop's chief candy officer. "It gives me goose bumps to even consider the question." Gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities of fine, artisanal confections led to the flights menu: Belly up to the counter and savor three variations of specialty treats, whether caramels, truffles, chocolates, or "chef's choice." Naturally, the shop also carries nostalgic candy classics, from Pop Rocks and Necco Wafers to assorted gummies, plus ice cream sundaes and floats. Those with a sense of adventure will explore the small-batch gourmet treats from Chicago-born makers like Mayana Chocolate and Chocs 'N Boxes. "That, to me, is the heart of this business," says Mason. *717 Lake St., Oak Park*

1 Chocs 'N Boxes bonbons, $14.75 for a five-piece box
2 Dorval Rainbow Sour Belts, $6.50 for half a pound
3 Compartés chocolate bar, $9.65
4 Mayana candy bar, $7.35
5 Whirly Pop lollipop, $4.50
6 Clever Candy 3D gummy fruit mix, $6.50 for half a pound

Maker's Mark

Vase & Vessel gives local artisans a stage.

Opened in September by William Dlugokienski, a former Northwestern University event planner, this small Andersonville storefront (5135 N. Clark St.) boasts plants galore and an array of locally handcrafted containers. Three of our favorite collections:



BRIAN BULLOCK'S SKYLINE TRIBUTES
The ceramic artist presents the Chicago horizon in abstract form with these boxy vases.

DARA SCHUMAN'S GEOMETRIC VESSELS
It was love at first high-school art class for this creator, who plays with glazing techniques and geometry.

FABIEL CAMPOS'S RECLAIMED CREATIONS
Sourcing wood from fallen maple and walnut trees, Campos sculpts his wares using antique chisels.
—HEIDI MITCHELL

Photography by LISA PREDKO

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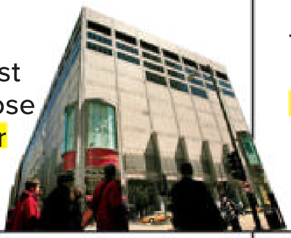
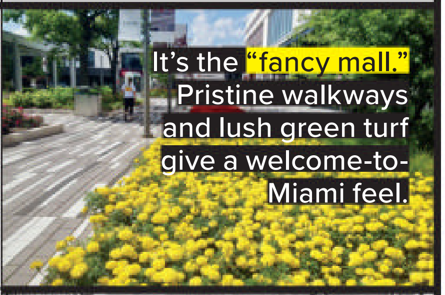
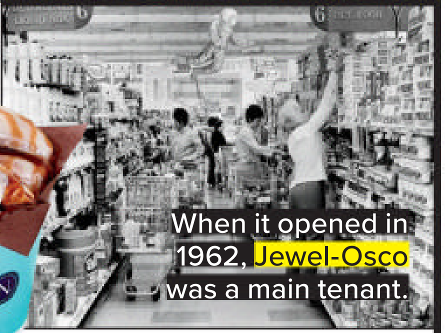
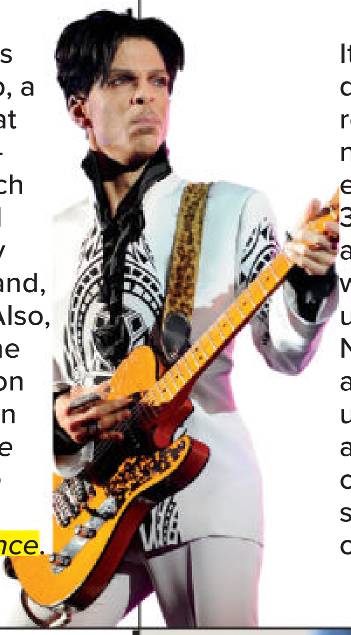
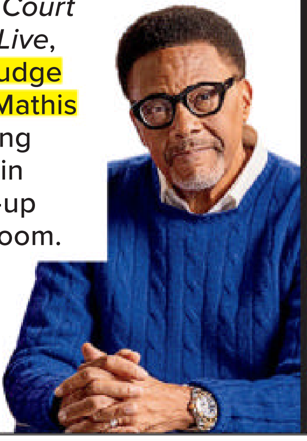
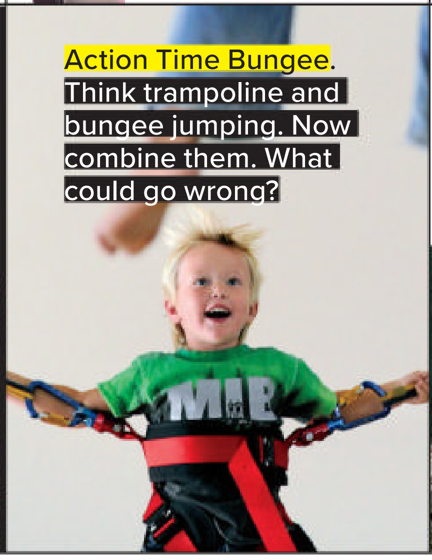
The Mall Remix Matrix

As brick-and-mortar retail dwindles, shopping centers are reinventing themselves as multipurpose playgrounds.

By KELLY AIGLON

	WATER TOWER PLACE 835 N. Michigan Ave., Magnificent Mile	**THE SHOPS AT NORTH BRIDGE** 520 N. Michigan Ave., Magnificent Mile	**FOX VALLEY MALL** Route 59 and York Street, Aurora	**OAKBROOK CENTER** Interstate 88 and Route 83, Oak Brook
CLAIM TO FAME	Opened in 1975, it was the first multipurpose skyscraper mall. 	It's a gateway to the city's most impressive Nordstrom.	Former anchor Carson Pirie Scott's Santa Claus would draw lines out the door.	 It's the "fancy mall." Pristine walkways and lush green turf give a welcome-to-Miami feel.
ONCE UPON A TIME	Lord & Taylor! Marshall Field's! Oprah Winfrey's condo!	Armani Exchange and Louis Vuitton held sway.	It was a classic *Stranger Things*–style teen hangout that answered every Cinnabon dream.	 When it opened in 1962, Jewel-Osco was a main tenant.
TODAY'S TRANSFORMATION	It's a kids' world, and frenzied parents are just shopping in it. Joining mainstays like American Girl Place and the Lego Store are Unicorn World, JoJo's Shake Bar, Selfie Haus of Chicago (photo backdrops to feed every tween's TikTok aspirations), and, most recently, *Harry Potter: Magic at Play*, an immersive experience.	E-commerce brands are moving in. Leap, a Chicago startup that provides brick-and-mortar space to such businesses, helped fill vacancies left by Sephora, Lucky Brand, and Alex and Ani. Also, the mall has become interactive exhibition central, having been the site for both *The Friends Experience* and *Prince: The Immersive Experience*. 	It's doubled down on residences, not retail, erecting the 304-unit Lumen apartments where Sears used to be. Next up: an attached 319-unit luxury apartment complex and senior living center.	Luxury is the name of the game, with Gucci having arrived in October 2021 and C.D. Peacock on the docket for this June. Even the experiential tenants are bougie: *Louvre Fantastique*, featuring 3D re-creations of masterpieces, recently took over the Sears space.
INVENTIVE TOUCH	Hubbard Street Dance moved its performance and practice space into the former Adidas store.	The mall hosted A&E's *Court Night Live*, with Judge Greg Mathis litigating cases in a pop-up courtroom. 	 Action Time Bungee. Think trampoline and bungee jumping. Now combine them. What could go wrong?	Escape the Room was a huge investment, at $100,000 to build (the biggest budget of any escape room in the Chicago area). Two words: animatronic dinosaurs.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (WATER TOWER PLACE) ALEX GARCIA/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (NORDSTROM) PHIL VELASQUEZ/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (HAT) GETTY IMAGES; (OAKBROOK CENTER) CHUCK FIELDMAN/*PIONEER PRESS*; (WINFREY) STEVE JENNINGS/GETTY IMAGES; (BAG) LOUIS VUITTON; (CINNABON) CINNABON; (JEWEL-OSCO) *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (SHAKE) JOJO'S SHAKE BAR: (PRINCE) BERTRAND GUAY/AFP; (LOUVRE) LOUVRE FANTASTIQUE; (HUBBARD STREET DANCE) MICHELLE REID; (MATHIS) ZAK DeZON/A+E NETWORKS; (BUNGEE) JOHN PATRIQUIN/*PORTLAND PRESS HERALD*; (DINOSAUR) ESCAPE THE ROOM

2023

MEDICAL **PROFILES**

Cardinal Bernardin
Cancer Center
LOYOLA

From left: Vikram Prabhu, MD; Kevin Barton, MD; Amit Goyal, MD; Anand Germanwala, MD; Matthew Harkenrider, MD; Alec Block, MD; Irida Kastrati, PhD; Abhishek Solanki, MD; Adam Kabaker, MD; Mitchell Denning, PhD; Eric Thorpe, MD; Gerard Abood, MD; Valerie Chai, PhD; Sebastien Gros, PhD.

LOYOLA'S CARDINAL BERNARDIN CANCER CENTER

Researchers at Loyola Medicine's Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center focus on developing innovative treatments, discovering underlying causes of cancer, and training the next generation of physicians and scientists.

An expanding research ecosystem on Loyola University Chicago's Health Sciences Campus, the Cancer Center's team of physician-scientists and researchers seeks to identify strategies to prevent, diagnose, and treat a range of cancers. Loyola Medicine's nationally recognized team of specially trained cancer doctors from a wide variety of clinical specialties take a multidisciplinary approach to providing compassionate care. Our goal: translate discovery into clinical practice to improve patient outcomes and ultimately transform lives.

Our multidisciplinary, collaborative approach applies the best thinking from research bench to bedside, and beyond. For example, Loyola scientists have studied the role of the immune system in fighting cancer. We were the first in Chicago to engineer CAR-T cells from an individual's T cells. This "living drug," produced in a state-of-the-art, onsite lab (which can reduce treatment costs) is a potentially curative treatment for leukemia and lymphoma. The Cancer Center's robust clinical trials program manages an average of nearly 300 clinical trials annually. These trials are important paths to discovery of new treatments.

Training the Next Generation
Our physician-scientists and researchers are committed to training the next generation through graduate and medical student education. Students from Loyola University Chicago's Biomedical Sciences programs and Stritch School of Medicine work alongside the Cardinal Bernardin Cancer

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCIS SON

Cardinal Bernardin
Cancer Center
LOYOLA

From left: Alex Herskovic, MD; William Small Jr., MD; Joseph Clark, MD; Nan Sethakorn, MD, PhD; Marcus Quek, MD; Abigail Winder, MD; John Leonetti, MD; Richard Borrowdale, MD; Lawrence Knab, MD; Anil Sethi, PhD.

Center's nationally recognized cadre of scientists and physicians, many who are influential in their particular fields for their groundbreaking research. Stritch faculty members encourage their students to push the boundaries of science in their quest for cures, treatments, and greater understanding of how cancer cells work.

Among Stritch's signature research programs is STAR (Student Training in Approaches to Research), an eight-week research education program where medical students are fully engaged in research and guided by a research mentor. At the undergraduate level, the Summer Oncology Research Internship is a highly competitive program for Loyola students who work side by side with Cancer Center scientists for 10 weeks, learning laboratory techniques and the science behind each of their projects. Stritch Biomedical Sciences graduates, fellows, and residents are well positioned to pursue careers in academia, research, health care, and industry.

For more information about Loyola's Stritch School of Medicine, visit **luc.edu/stritch**.

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As Northwestern Medicine continues to grow, Lurie Cancer Center will expand our efforts to push the boundaries of research and cancer care. Learn more about the Lurie Cancer Center at **cancer.northwestern.edu** or call **312-695-0990** to schedule an appointment.

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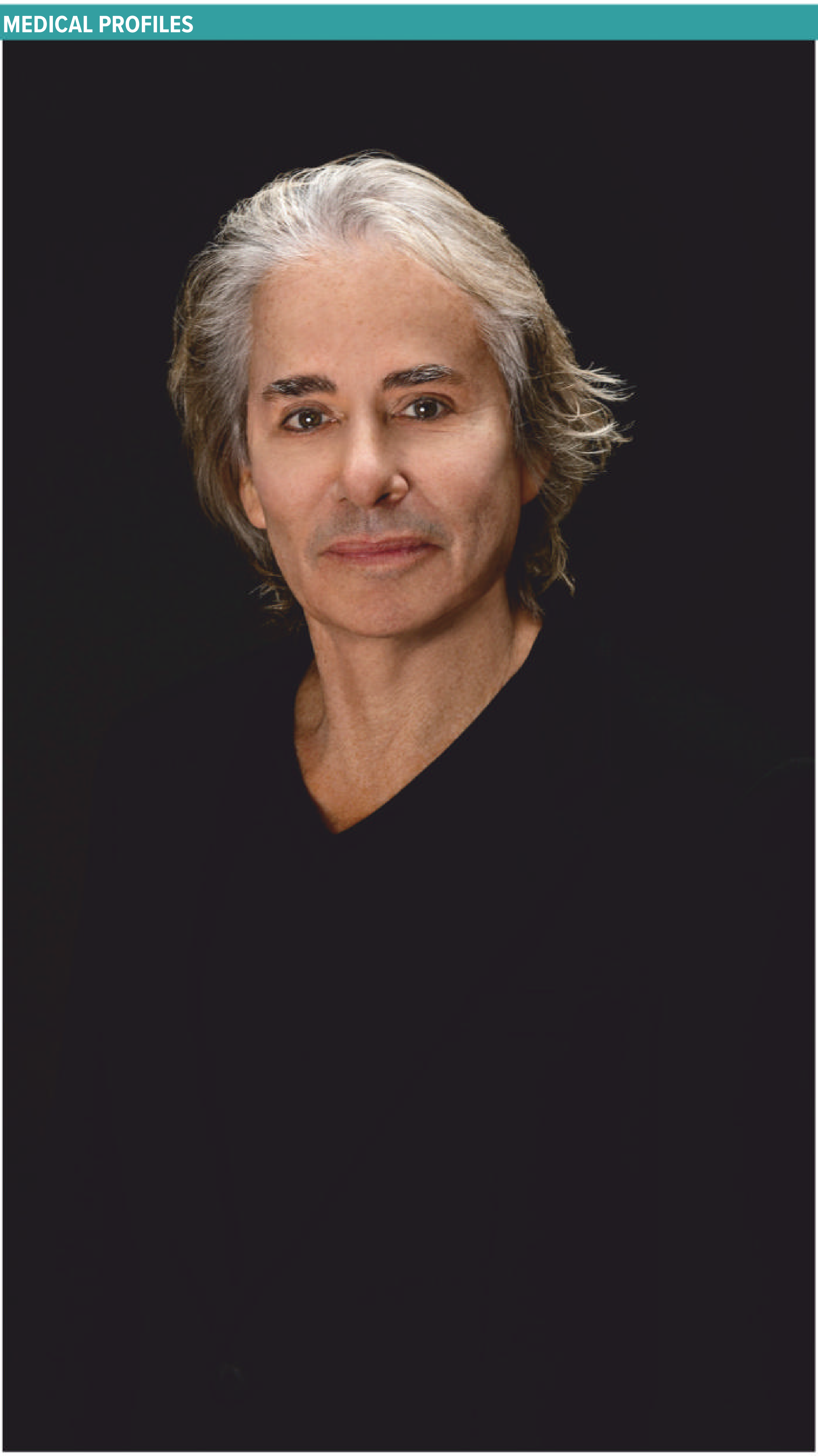

BODY BY BLOCH

STEVEN BLOCH, MD

Dr. Steven Bloch is a nationally recognized plastic surgeon with an international patient base. He has consistently been named a "top plastic surgeon." He has been a leader in introducing advanced techniques in his Center of Excellence, including most recently the Vaser 4D Hi-Definition Liposculpture.

A board-certified plastic surgeon for more than 30 years, Dr. Bloch has the skills and experience to match. He rose to prominence quickly and has been featured on CBS, Discovery Channel, FOX News Channel, NBC, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and WGN-TV Chicago, to name a few.

Dr. Bloch combines an artistic sense with a technical, scientific background to create a natural and refined look for his patients. He believes that each of us has an inner sense of how we should look, and the art of plastic surgery is to listen to each patient's desires and needs. It is important to separate reality from fantasy. After a consultation with the patient, a plan is outlined and costs are discussed. The next step is to transform these dreams, when appropriate, into reality.

Dr. Bloch does not believe that his role ends with surgery. He is actively involved in the post-operative phase and has a dedicated staff to assist patients with their needs, whether medical or emotional.

Additionally, he has a nationally recognized medical spa with state-of-the-art, spare-no-expense, cutting-edge technologies to treat the entire body. The latest technology being introduced to the Chicago area is UltraShape™ for non-invasive fat destruction. This really works and is painless. We guarantee it. Dr. Bloch supervises these treatments at Skin Deep Medical Spa, which has locations in Highland Park and Glenview.

All injections are given by Dr. Bloch; he believes your face is too important to delegate to a non-physician. Furthermore, a firm understanding of the aging process and underlying anatomy is critical to getting it right.

To learn about new and innovative treatment options, Dr. Bloch encourages you to visit his websites at bodybybloch.com and skindeepmedicalspa.com.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: GLENN KAUPERT

DR. JOHN Q. COOK

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Dr. John Q. Cook is recognized as a Top Doctor in plastic surgery by Castle Connolly, the official source of peer-reviewed Top Doctors in all 50 states.

This award demonstrates Dr. Cook's deep commitment to medical excellence. He provides his patients with a caring environment and a team of trusted advisors who use their expertise to put the patients' needs first.

Dr. Cook, a board-certified plastic surgeon, is the founder and medical director of the Whole Beauty® Institute located in Chicago and Winnetka. His surgical philosophy is rooted in naturalism to enhance the intrinsic beauty of each patient and compliment the natural structure of the face and body form.

Dr. Cook has lectured at national and international meetings about his advanced surgical techniques for facial rejuvenation under local anesthesia, breast surgery, and body contour. As an independent plastic surgeon on the faculty of Rush University Medical Center for over 25 years, he has helped train plastic surgeons who have become leaders.

Facial rejuvenation surgery is a central focus of Dr. Cook's practice. He has performed several thousand facial procedures in his career and has combined fat transfer with structural lifting for over 25 years. Dr. Cook is also well-known for his structural technique of breast lift, which repositions the body's own natural tissue to create lift and add volume. His practice was also one of the first in the Midwest to integrate advanced techniques of surgical and non-surgical body contour.

The Whole Beauty® team is integral to Dr. Cook's practice. Every team member holds extensive experience and shares in Dr. Cook's passion for natural results. We offer the complete continuum of plastic surgery and aesthetic treatments backed by deep knowledge.

For those considering plastic surgery, Dr. Cook's website is an excellent guide for detailed information about surgical and non-surgical treatments in an easy to understand format. He shares what patients need to know in advance to help them make the best choice possible for their individual needs.

John Q. Cook, M.D.
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SCAN ME

Castle Connolly Top Doctor 2021, *Chicago* Magazine

MICHAEL A. EPSTEIN, MD

CONCIERGE AESTHETICS AND PLASTIC SURGERY

Smart, professional, gifted, compassionate, knowledgeable, and kind. These are the words that many have used to describe plastic surgeon Dr. Michael A. Epstein. With almost 30 years of experience, he is among the profession's elite. He is the recipient of the distinguished Castle Connolly "Top Doctor" award for excellence in plastic surgery and has been named a "Top Plastic Surgeon" by *U.S. News & World Report*. In addition, he has been listed in the "10 Best Plastic Surgeons—Illinois" numerous times.

Dr. Epstein is a board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in facial rejuvenation, rhinoplasty, and breast enhancement surgery. He prides himself on producing beautiful and natural results. At the same time, he remains committed to delivering state-of-the-art procedures like his "scarless brow lift" or his minimally invasive neck lift using Renuvion® technology. Dr. Epstein is an active member of the Aesthetic Society, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, and the Rhinoplasty Society. He has also received praise for his generous work with organizations including Healing the Children and the Sue Duncan Children's Center.

Concierge Aesthetics and Plastic Surgery a state-of-the-art practice with five Chicagoland locations offers a myriad of nonsurgical and minimally invasive treatments to complement his surgery. This provides each patient with the most comprehensive care in aesthetic medicine available in the Chicago area. Popular procedures offered include skin tightening with Ulthera, Moxi, Forever Young BBL, CoolSculpting, EMSculpting, HydraFacial MD®, and Morpheus8, as well as, PRP, Botox, and injectable fillers.

Dr. Epstein performs surgery in his fully accredited facility, **Northbrook Plastic Surgery**, located in the **Concierge Aesthetics and Plastic Surgery** office suites. Patients receive the highest standard of care, ensuring that the experience is as safe and comfortable as possible. From the initial consultation to the final postoperative visit, Dr. Epstein and his staff do everything possible to exceed their patients' expectations.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCIS SON

DR. PETER D. GELDNER

THE GELDNER CENTER

Go from ordinary to extraordinary with today's advanced cosmetic surgery aesthetic procedures from The Geldner Center. Experience a whole new way to feel about yourself and gain a new outlook on life. Dr. Peter Geldner is a nationally recognized board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in cosmetic surgery of the face and body. He has performed surgery on thousands of satisfied patients over the past 32 years and has demonstrated the highest level of expertise in his field. The Geldner Center is committed to maximizing each patient's aesthetic goals while providing a personalized experience.

Dr. Geldner is past president of the Chicago Society of Plastic Surgeons and is considered one of the leading plastic surgeons in the Midwest. He is a perennial fixture on "best of" lists, both regionally and nationally. Dr. Geldner has been named a "Top Doctor" by *U.S. News and World Report*, Castle Connolly, the Consumers' Research Council of America, and *Chicago* magazine. When the media wants an expert, they talk to Dr. Geldner. He has shared his expertise on ABC, NBC, WGN, Fox Business, Fox News, the Learning Channel, Web MD Radio Live, and many other media outlets.

The Geldner Center's Chicago and western suburb locations feature nonsurgical treatments like Ultherapy, CoolSculpting®, EMSculpt NEO, EMTone, and EmFace. EMFace is a revolution in facial treatments. By admitting both synchronized RF and HIFES energies, it simultaneously affects the skin and muscles. The end result is fewer wrinkles. Best of all, Emface treats for the full face and only 20 minutes.

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Gregory A. Turowski, MD, PhD, FACS, completed surgical residencies at America's most prestigious medical institutions — Yale and Harvard — and became double board-certified in general and plastic surgery. He is a member of the prestigious American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

For over 25 years, Dr. Turowski has specialized in cosmetic surgery of the face and body, including natural rhinoplasties and popular "mommy makeovers." He is a renowned expert in performing armpit breast augmentation. This unique procedure offers breast enhancement without any breast scars.

He also regularly performs minimally invasive internal breast lifts and revision surgeries. Dr Turowski mastered natural face rejuvenation techniques for women and men such as endoscopic deep plane face and midface and forehead lifts. He is an esteemed pioneer of robotic FUE hair restoration and one of the most experienced ARTAS hair transplant surgeons in the world.

Aditya Sood, MD, MBA, FACS, is a board certified plastic surgeon with advanced training from an American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery–endorsed fellowship at the Ohio State University. He received his medical degree from Chicago Medical School and finished plastic surgery residency at Rutgers Medical School. Dr. Sood specializes in advanced aesthetic surgery of the face, breast, and body and nonsurgical cosmetic procedures. His special interest lies in gender affirmation surgery and male enhancement procedures.

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Back row, from left: Melissa McIver, FNP-C; Christina Dimitropoulos, FNP-C; Lider Koc, Practice Administrator; Karen Smith, PA-C; Valerie Laniosz, MD, PhD.
Front row, from left: Miranda Pierangeli, FNP-C; Vassilios Dimitropoulos, MD; Benjamin Garden, MD; Elizabeth Zanone, PA-C.

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MEDICAL PROFILES

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Closing out 2022, Dr. Warner announced his newly offered SWIFT Sculpt procedure, the latest proprietary technique in an ever-growing list of State-of-the-art Warner Institute Facelift Technique (SWIFT) procedures. The SWIFT Sculpt permanently contours the jawline and defines the profile while cutting operating and recovery times, as it is performed under local anesthesia in the office.

The past year also saw a monumental move for the Warner Institute — with its brand-new 4,000-square-foot facility in Northfield, the Warner Institute has more than tripled its space, featuring enhanced clinical suites, a reception space with a workstation and beverage bar, and a complete state-of-the-art operating suite, including an operating room and private recovery rooms.

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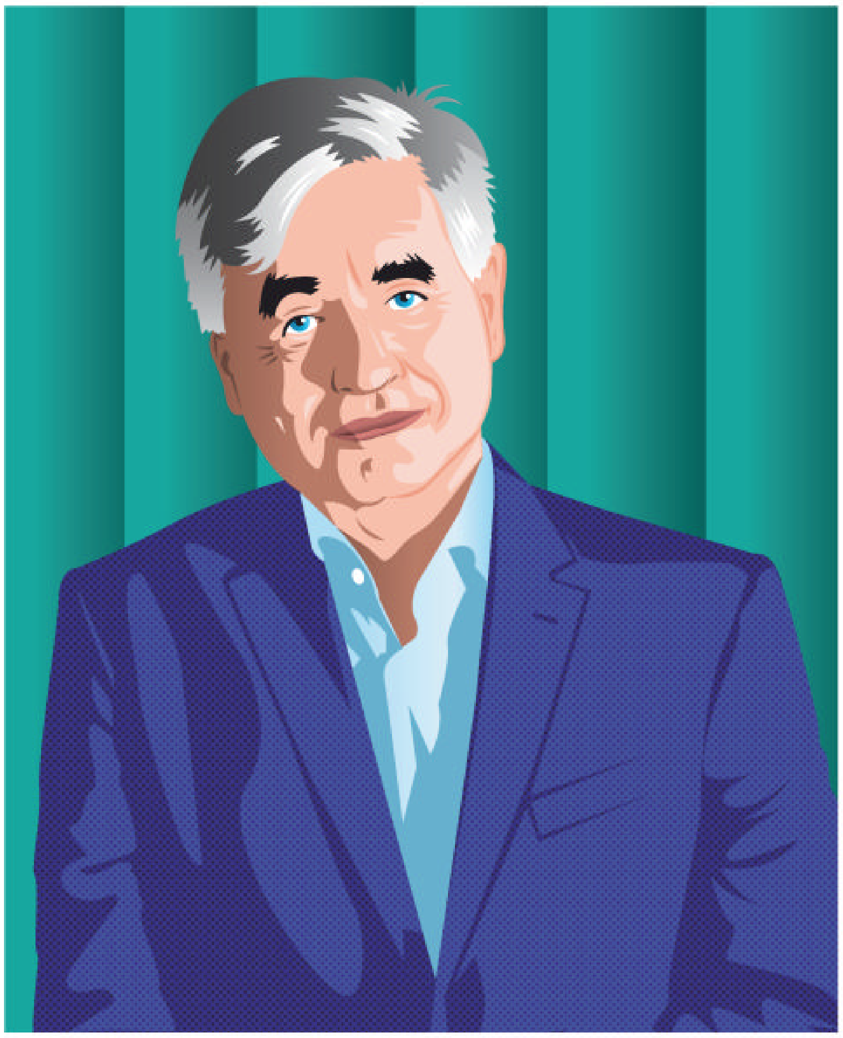

Steve James

The documentarian, 68, on his deeper motive for *Hoop Dreams* and how he puts subjects at ease

Interview by MIKE THOMAS

■ **I grew up loving basketball more than anything.** A big part of my formative experience was playing on my high school team, which was overwhelmingly Black players. The neighborhood I lived in was rightfully considered quite redneck, so I felt like I lived in two different worlds. I think that tension pushed me toward a heightened awareness of race for a white kid. But it wasn't until I made *No Crossover: The Trial of Allen Iverson* that I fully understood that a deeper motivation for my wanting to do *Hoop Dreams* was because, for all my experiences with Black players as teammates, I really didn't know these guys that well. I had little sense of their home lives and aspirations. *Hoop Dreams* became a way to understand something deeper about their lives through telling the stories of William and Arthur.

■ **If not for Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel,** *Hoop Dreams* could very well have come and gone and gotten no distribution. There were distributors who loved it but were like, "It's a three-hour documentary about kids playing basketball." Siskel and Ebert gave them the confidence to say, "Maybe this thing can work." *Hoop Dreams* exceeded my wildest expectations, and it gave me a career. But I had to make my peace with the fact that I would probably never make another film again that anyone would see in the same way.

■ **If you have someone over for a first date,** you're going to cook your signature dish, pick your best outfit, make sure everything is cleaned up. And that's the way subjects are sometimes, because they want to impress us. My goal – and this is one of the reasons we spend so much time with them – is to get to the point where they don't give a shit anymore, where they just be themselves. And that's where real things happen.

■ **One of the ways I build relationships** is through humor, even in the most serious situations. It's a key part of my arsenal – being willing to poke fun at myself. Because people not only have to want to be in your film, they have to enjoy being around you. It's one of the reasons I make sure there are no assholes on the crews I work with.

■ **Part of my process** has always been to show the films to the primary subjects before they're done, but with the understanding that I'm not handing over editorial control. I'm very clear about that. What I am saying to them is that I care very much about what they think of their portrayal in this film, and if they feel like I've got something wrong or it's unfair, then tell me and let's talk about it. I have changed things as a result of that. Sometimes, the process can be demanding and exhausting, but I've never seriously doubted that's the right way to go about it.

■ **I love every aspect of filmmaking.** I love this feeling of living inside the world of the subjects we're following. When you come through that process with people you've gotten to know in a very deep way, there's something really wonderful about that. The film becomes this statement of why their lives matter in a way that wasn't as clear to them before.

■ **I don't think of myself as an artist at all.** I don't feel comfortable with the pretensions. But I come by my humility honestly. It's not an act, and I'm plenty insecure. No matter how many successful films I've done, I don't feel like I really know anything. C

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